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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	09/13 New wildfires southwest France
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/wildfires-france-fires-evacuations-a234249c6dc77c0c9770c6f399e3a382
GIST	<p>PARIS (AP) — New wildfires raging in southwestern France have torn through over 1,000 hectares of land and forced the evacuation of residents amid record temperatures for September.</p> <p>Fires that began to rage Monday caused the evacuation of over 500 people in the Gironde region, as a smaller blaze burned south of Bordeaux, near Dax, where temperatures reached 39C (102F).</p> <p>Strong winds hampered the efforts of hundreds of firefighters, who struggled to extinguish the flames throughout the night into Tuesday with little success. The fires are still uncontained.</p>

	<p>Two Canadair aircraft specialized in firefighting — that already saw considerable work over the hot summer months in southern France — have been deployed to help, alongside helicopters and a Dash plane.</p> <p>French weather agency Meteo France announced Monday it had recorded record temperatures for the month of September — especially in the southwest due to a heatwave rising up from Morocco. Mercury hit 39.1 degrees Celsius (102.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in the southwestern Landes region.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/13 US avoids victory dance Russia rout
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-nato-biden-technology-f16a66971fa9743fd3bfd6e15c95f501
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. leaders from President Joe Biden on down are being careful not to declare a premature victory after a Ukrainian offensive forced Russian troops into a messy retreat in the north. Instead, military officials are looking toward the fights yet to come and laying out plans to provide Ukraine more weapons and expand training, while warily awaiting Russia’s response to the sudden, stunning battlefield losses.</p> <p>Although there was widespread celebration of Ukraine’s gains over the weekend, U.S. officials know Russian President Vladimir Putin still has troops and resources to tap, and his forces still control large swaths of the east and south.</p> <p>“I agree there should be no spiking of the ball because Russia still has cards it can play,” said Philip Breedlove, a retired U.S. Air Force general who was NATO’s top commander from 2013 to 2016. “Ukraine is now clearly making durable changes in its east and north and I believe that if the West properly equips Ukraine, they’ll be able to hold on to their gains.”</p> <p>Lawmakers particularly pointed to the precision weapons and rocket systems that the U.S. and Western nations have provided to Ukraine as key to the dramatic shift in momentum, including the precision-guided High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, and the High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile, or HARM, which is designed to target and destroy radar-equipped air defense systems.</p> <p>“They’re there, they’re in theater, and they’re making the difference,” Sen. Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat and member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the hands of highly motivated Ukrainian fighters who are making the most of weapons ranging from off-the-shelf drones and abandoned Russian arms to advanced weapons from the West, the HIMARS are enabling Ukrainians “to turn the tide, dramatically,” Coons said.</p> <p>Meanwhile, a senior defense official said the U.S. is looking at future needs, including discussions about providing more intensive combat training for larger Ukraine units, a change from current training focused on smaller teams learning to handle specific weapons. It is also considering sending additional air defense systems, as well as lethal strike drones and more surveillance drones. The official was one of two who briefed reporters Monday on condition of anonymity to discuss planning details.</p> <p>Ukraine’s launch in recent days of a much-anticipated counteroffensive — in a different part of the country from where Russian troops occupying Ukraine had massed strength to meet it — has brought on the biggest territorial changes in months in the 200-day war, launched when Putin rolled Russian forces into the neighboring country, targeting its Western-oriented government.</p> <p>The U.S. officials acknowledged that the U.S. provided information to help the Ukrainian counteroffensive, but declined to say how much or if Western officials helped strategize the idea to throw Russian forces off guard by calling attention to attack plans in the south, while actually plotting a more formidable campaign in the east.</p>

The U.S. provided information “on conditions” in the country, said one of the officials, but “in the end, this was the Ukrainian choice. The Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian political leadership made the decisions on how to conduct this counteroffensive.”

Ukrainian forces claimed Monday to have retaken a wide band of territory and more than 20 Ukrainian settlements from Russia, pushing all the way back to the two countries’ northeastern border. Russian soldiers were surrendering in such numbers that Ukraine was having difficulty making room for them, Ukrainian military officials said.

Ukrainians have pounded 400 targets in all with the HIMARS since the U.S. began supplying them, using them “with devastating effect,” Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters late last week as Ukraine’s counteroffensive was getting underway.

The truck-mounted, GPS-guided systems fire faster, farther and more precisely than the Soviet-designed rocket launchers otherwise used by both Russia and Ukraine. They can hit targets up to 80 kilometers (50 miles) away. Ukrainian forces have used the 16 HIMARS and several similar systems to strike supply lines, ammunition depots and other key Russian targets.

The Ukrainians “believe that this has happened because of the new technology equipment and weapons that we’ve sent them. They ... said well, if you would have sent them six months ago,” said Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat. “We didn’t have them six months ago, but you know, we had to build the weaponry, and train their people on it, takes time.”

Still, Ukrainian leaders are still pressing for more — including fighter jets and the longer-range Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, a surface-to-surface missile that the U.S. has so far declined to send.

A key question going forward will be how much more Congress and the American public are willing to spend on the war in Ukraine, which the U.S. and the West say also represents a significant threat to Europe.

It’s unclear if, or how, Ukraine fighters’ successes in recent day will affect the ongoing debate. The White House has asked Congress to greenlight an additional \$11.7 billion in aid as part of an overall government funding measure that lawmakers must approve before the end of the month.

“I haven’t seen any lack of appetite so far” for continuing funding for Ukraine, said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. “I think to see the ability to take the help that they’ve been given and then be clearly successful in some of their efforts is an encouragement to want to do more of that.”

The U.S. — the lead contributor to Ukraine’s war effort among NATO members — has poured more than \$15 billion in weapons and other military support into Ukraine since January.

Biden acknowledged the battlefield gains for Ukraine over the weekend but refused to say more. “I’m not going to speak to that now because things are in process,” he told reporters.

Breedlove noted that despite the recent battle losses, Putin still has “a lot of tanks and a lot of trucks and a lot of people that he can still throw at this problem. They’re just not his best tanks, his best trucks or his best people.”

But he warned that winter may bring the most daunting challenge. Putin’s moves to shut down fuel supplies to Europe, which is expected to increase prices, are likely aimed at turning public opinion across the region.

“Even though Mr. Putin’s military has taken a beating on the military front, his big card, yet probably to play is how well does Europe hold together through a winter that Mr. Putin is going to make completely miserable for the European people,” Breedlove said. “I think Mr. Putin is desperately trying to hang on to

	winter because his big hope now is to separate the European people from their European political leadership.”
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HEADLINE	09/12 US sent \$1.3B Covid aid abroad
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2022/09/12/sba-fraud-foreign-eidl/
GIST	<p>As the U.S. government raced to shore up small businesses’ finances at the height of the pandemic, it may have erroneously awarded more than \$1.3 billion to foreign applicants — raising new suspicions that the program might have helped fund overseas crime syndicates.</p> <p>The top watchdog for the Small Business Administration, which reported its findings on Monday, said the spending posed a “significant risk of potential fraud.” In doing so, the watchdog underscored the agency’s persistent, costly and well-documented struggles to ensure its vast array of coronavirus aid benefited the cash-strapped firms that needed it the most.</p> <p>The trouble concerned the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, or EIDL, an initiative dating back to the Trump administration that provided grants and other financial support to struggling small companies. More than 27.8 million applicants ultimately sought funds from the SBA, overwhelming an agency that had been tasked to oversee a vast array of emergency spending that dwarfed its annual budget.</p> <p>Congress required the SBA to disburse its EIDL aid only to those businesses affected by the pandemic and located in the U.S. or its territories. But a crush of applications from foreign sources still flooded the agency over the life of its program — and the SBA repeatedly appeared to fund them anyway.</p> <p>In total, SBA made 41,638 awards totaling \$1.3 billion to applicants that pursued that aid using computers believed to be located abroad, according to the agency’s inspector general. The watchdog said that some of the applications came from what were deemed “high risk” countries, which should have been blocked from filing applications outright. More than \$14 million in EIDL aid went to applicants in these unnamed countries, the investigation found.</p> <p>In many cases, the new report attributed the potential theft to poor oversight and faulty technology. That included a system for receiving and vetting applications — designed and managed by an unnamed outside contractor — that failed to thwart potentially problematic foreign applications as intended, according to the inspector general.</p> <p>Adding to the trouble, the watchdog specifically said the money may have been stolen by “international criminal organizations,” noting investigations are underway to find some of these malicious actors.</p> <p>Christina Carr, a spokeswoman for SBA, said in a statement Monday the issues stemmed from a technical decision made under the Trump administration that since has been rectified. She added that the agency is “committed to ensuring that effective fraud controls are in place for future programs.”</p> <p>In its official reply to the inspector general, included as part of the report, the SBA also said the \$1.3 billion in questionable funds represented less than 0.04 percent of the total \$342 billion approved for EIDL.</p> <p>SBA leaders also pointed to the fact they had stopped “millions of attempts” from foreign sources to access its online application portal. Otherwise, agency officials said they would review the awards for potential abuse.</p> <p>The OIG declined to identify the contractor that helped SBA create its systems. The watchdog cautioned in its report that not every foreign application may be fraudulent, since it is possible for Americans who reside abroad — or businesses with certain ownership stakes in U.S. firms — to qualify as long as they meet other criteria.</p>

	<p>The findings nonetheless add to the myriad headaches facing SBA, which was tasked with managing more than \$1 trillion in aid since the start of the pandemic. The agency’s work over the past two years did contribute to a swift and stunning recovery for an economy that had been in free-fall, keeping countless businesses from shuttering for good. But it also carried significant risks for waste, fraud and abuse, the consequences of which have been laid bare in a year-long investigation by The Washington Post.</p> <p>Much of the suspected SBA theft targeted the Paycheck Protection Program, which provided forgivable loans to businesses. Both the PPP and EIDL date back to the Trump administration.</p> <p>With EIDL, for example, congressional investigators found this summer that as many as 1.6 million, or 41 percent, of the 3.9 million loan applications received under the program “may have been approved with no actual review by an SBA employee.” Earlier, the agency’s inspector general found that SBA had awarded EIDL funds to criminals that applied using stolen identities, The Post has reported.</p> <p>And SBA has faced criticism for the way it doled out aid for other initiatives, including a program for shuttered concert halls and other performance venues. Some of those funds ended up going to firms linked to Live Nation Entertainment — an industry giant that some members of Congress said they did not intend to benefit from the law.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Monkeypox continues spread: 500 cases
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/monkeypox-continues-spread-with-state-reporting-more-than-500-cases/CXALGAE6MFD6BKVO6WTGBX7IOY/
GIST	<p>Monkeypox continues to spread in Washington, as state health officials reported 506 cases on Monday.</p> <p>King, Pierce and Snohomish counties were reporting the highest case numbers.</p> <p>King County had a case count of 408, while Pierce reported 40, and Snohomish 19 cases.</p> <p>Last month, health officials in King County declared monkeypox a public health emergency.</p> <p>Executive Dow Constantine issued a local emergency proclamation that would allow Public Health — Seattle & King County to be more flexible with procurement, hiring and contracting protocols as they respond to the outbreak.</p> <p>“We are fortunate to have one of the best public health organizations in the nation right here in King County, and today’s action ensures they will have all the tools needed to take on the challenge of monkeypox,” Constantine said.</p> <p>Public Health — Seattle & King County also launched a Monkeypox data dashboard on its website, similar to a tool on the website that tracks COVID-19 cases.</p> <p>Monkeypox is typically spread by close physical contact and can be extremely painful.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Oil prices rise amid supply uncertainty
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/finance/streettalk/oil-prices-rise/2022/09/12/id/1087037/
GIST	<p>Oil prices rose on Monday as Iranian nuclear talks appeared to hit obstacles and an embargo on Russian oil shipments loomed, with tight supply struggling to meet still robust demand.</p> <p>Brent crude futures rose 88 cents, or 1%, to \$93.72 a barrel by 1100 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was up 69 cents, or 0.8%, at \$87.48.</p>

Prices were little changed last week as gains from a nominal supply cut by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies including Russia, a group known as OPEC+, were offset by lockdowns in top crude importer China.

France, Britain and Germany on Saturday said they had "serious doubts" about Iran's intentions to revive a nuclear deal. Failure to revive the 2015 deal would keep Iranian oil off the market and keep global supply tight.

Global oil prices could rebound towards the end of the year, with supply expected to tighten further when a European Union embargo on Russian oil takes effect on Dec. 5.

The G7 will implement a price cap on Russian oil to limit the country's oil export revenue, seeking to punish Moscow over the invasion of Ukraine, while taking measures to ensure that oil could still flow to emerging nations.

The U.S. Treasury, however, warned that the cap could send oil and U.S. gasoline prices even higher this winter.

In more bearish news for markets, China's oil demand could contract for the first time in two decades this year as Beijing's zero-COVID policy keeps people at home during holidays and reduces fuel consumption.

"The lingering presence of headwinds from China's renewed virus restrictions and further moderation in global economic activities could still draw some reservations over a more sustained upside," said Jun Rong Yeap, market strategist at IG.

The European Central Bank and U.S. Federal Reserve, meanwhile, are prepared to increase interest rates further to tackle inflation, which could strengthen the U.S. currency and make dollar-denominated oil more expensive for investors.

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HEADLINE	09/13 Ukraine pressures retreating Russia forces
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-zelenskyy-nato-kharkiv-7753fe41f7e03efa0bec0a37e18f3de6?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=TopNews&utm_campaign=position_1
GIST	<p>KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian troops continued to pile unrelenting pressure on retreating Russian forces on Tuesday, seeking to hold on to their sudden momentum that has produced major territorial gains.</p> <p>Fresh yellow-and-blue flags fluttered from the tallest buildings left in partly destroyed towns around Ukraine's second city, Kharkiv, while Ukrainian soldiers inspected charred Russian tanks left along the way.</p> <p>"From the beginning of September until today, our soldiers have already liberated more than 6,000 square kilometers of the territory of Ukraine — in the east and south. The movement of our troops continues," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his nightly address late Monday.</p> <p>Many of the claims of military success could not be independently verified.</p> <p>Rubbing salt into Russia's wounds, British intelligence said that one of Moscow's premier forces, the 1st Guards Tank Army, had been "severely degraded" during the invasion and that "Russia's conventional force designed to counter NATO is severely weakened. It will likely take years for Russia to rebuild this capability."</p>

The retreat didn't stop Russia from pounding Ukrainian positions, however. Early Tuesday, it shelled the city of Lozova in the Kharkiv region, killing three people and injuring nine, said regional governor Oleh Syniehubov.

The Nikopol area, which is across the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, was shelled six times during the night but no injuries were immediately reported, said regional governor Valentyn Reznichenko. Continued shelling has left Europe's largest nuclear facility in a precarious position.

Zelenskyy specifically criticized Russia for targeting energy infrastructure in its attacks over the past days. "Hundreds and thousands of Ukrainians found themselves in the dark — without electricity. Houses, hospitals, schools, communal infrastructure... sites that have absolutely nothing to do with the infrastructure of the armed forces of our country."

He said it could only point to one thing. "This is a sign of the desperation of those who contrived this war. This is how they react to the defeat of Russian forces in the Kharkiv region. They can't do anything to our heroes on the battlefield."

Ukrainian military intelligence said Russian troops were surrendering en masse. A Ukrainian presidential adviser said there were so many prisoners of war that the country was running out of space to accommodate them.

The counteroffensive left the Kremlin struggling for a response to its largest military defeat in Ukraine since Russian forces pulled back from areas near Kyiv after a botched attempt to capture the capital early in the invasion.

The Russian Defense Ministry acknowledged the setback in a map that showed its troops pressed back along a narrow patch of land on the border with Russia — a tacit admission of big Ukrainian gains.

It was not yet clear if the Ukrainian blitz could signal a turning point in the war. Momentum has switched back and forth before, but rarely with such a big and sudden swing.

Some in Russia blamed Western weapons and fighters for the losses.

"It's not Ukraine that attacked Izium, but NATO," read a headline in the state-supported Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, referring to one of the areas where Russia said it has withdrawn troops.

Elsewhere, residents of a Russian village just across the border from Ukraine were evacuated after shelling by Ukrainian troops killed one person, according to Russia's Tass news agency.

The report cited the head of the local administration in Logachevka, who said Ukrainian troops opened fire at a border checkpoint.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Colleges monkeypox cases raise concerns
SOURCE	https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/monkeypox-infections-reported-by-colleges-raise-concerns-of-campus-spread/ar-AA11JKJS
GIST	<p>(Bloomberg) -- When Pennsylvania State University junior Nick Ribauda got an email last month saying that a fellow student had tested positive for monkeypox, his first thought was, "Oh boy, here we go again."</p> <p>Several US colleges have confirmed cases of the virus, raising concerns as students return to campus for the fall semester. That's especially so as many students, like 22-year-old Ribauda, saw earlier school years cut short or moved online due to Covid-19.</p>

With about 20,000 cases, the US outbreak of monkeypox is the world's biggest, spreading through intimate contact mainly among men who have sex with men. While global rates [have shown signs of cooling](#), dropping 21% in the week ended Aug. 21, concerns about the US outbreak are cresting as students return to school, ready to meet and form new relationships.

Two other Pennsylvania schools -- the University of Pittsburgh and West Chester University -- reported cases in students, while Bucknell University in Lewisburg reported an infection without specifying whether it was a student, faculty or staff. The West Chester student was identified during the summer term and finished those courses online, a university spokesperson said in an email.

Monkeypox doesn't spread like infections that are harbored in sexual fluids, yet it's often transmitted through close, intimate contact with lesions. Sexual activity is relatively common on college campuses, as are close gatherings in communal spaces like bars and parties. Bavarian Nordic A/S makes the only monkeypox vaccine. The shots still aren't widely available at schools, said [Rebecca Wurtz](#), an associate professor of health policy and management at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health.

"Monkeypox is here to stay," Wurtz said in an interview. "I think this is one more sexually transmitted infection to be added to the list that people need to be educated about."

While the disease isn't usually life-threatening, there have been deaths reported in other countries. In the US, Texas late last month [reported](#) a possible monkeypox-related death in a person who was severely immunocompromised with other chronic health issues. Los Angeles County health officials said Friday that they were conducting an autopsy to see if monkeypox infection contributed to the death of a resident.

Mounting, widespread cases are creating anxiety. Washington-based Georgetown University, American University and George Washington University all reported cases of monkeypox within their communities over the summer. Nearby, the University of Maryland reported a suspected infection. The University of Texas at Austin and Texas State University, some of the state's largest institutions, also confirmed infections. The University of Delaware reported a case in an employee last month, and said its health center has testing and is working to acquire vaccine supply.

Earlier this month, the Biden administration [requested](#) \$4.5 billion in funding to quell monkeypox, with \$1.6 billion of that to pay for vaccines and therapies. White House health officials [met](#) with college administrators across the country to discuss measures to control the spread of monkeypox on campus. On Sept. 1, the US Department of Health and Human Services hosted another call with more than 100 university presidents and top health officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and HHS. The CDC also launched a new web page with monkeypox resources applicable to universities and students in August.

Doing Enough?

The department, which is in charge of vaccine distribution, is not aware of any requests for Bavarian Nordic's vaccine from US universities or colleges, according to an HHS spokesperson.

For now, colleges say education is key to keeping monkeypox at bay. They're advising students to protect themselves by frequently washing their hands, avoiding contact with others who might have the disease, and to self isolate at home if they're showing symptoms.

"Educating the campus community on prevention of monkeypox infection will continue to be the focus of our efforts," said Emilio Carranco, director of the Student Health Center at Texas State University in San Marcos. "Information on prevention, testing and isolation has been provided to all students living on campus."

However, there's still uncertainty about how the semester will unfold, and easing the worries of college students will be difficult for colleges and universities, Wurtz said, in part because of the limited supplies of vaccines available to them.

	“Are they doing enough? Well, no,” she said. “But they’re doing as much as they can.”
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HEADLINE	09/12 Putin insider dies: falls overboard off boat
SOURCE	https://www.the-sun.com/news/6203860/putin-crony-falling-boat-seventh-suspicious-death/
GIST	<p>ONE of Vladimir Putin's cronies has died after he mysteriously "fell overboard" from a boat.</p> <p>It is the seventh suspicious death within the Kremlin's inner circle in just a matter of months.</p> <p>Ivan Pechorin - Putin's point man for developing Russia's vast Arctic resources - fell off the side of a boat in waters close to Russky Island, reports Russian paper Komsomolskaya Pravda.</p> <p>His body was found after a search lasting more than a day.</p> <p>The 39-year-old had recently attended a major conference hosted by the Kremlin warmonger in Vladivostok.</p> <p>It comes just weeks after Ravil Maganov - chairman of the Russian oil giant Lukoil, a firm that openly criticised Putin's invasion of Ukraine - reportedly died after plunging from a hospital window.</p> <p>High-flyer Pechorin was managing director of Putin’s Far East and Arctic Development Corporation. The corporation issued a statement about his “tragic death” while giving few details.</p> <p>It said: “Ivan's death is an irreparable loss for friends and colleagues, a great loss for the corporation.</p> <p>"We offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends.”</p> <p>Development of the Arctic - a rich source of oil and gas for Russia - is seen as essential amid sanctions and unprecedented economic problems facing Putin’s economy due to his war in Ukraine.</p> <p>Pechorin also had responsibility for the air industry across the vast east of Russia, a sector under strain from Western economic curbs.</p> <p>He recently addressed the Eastern Economic Forum led by Putin in a session aimed at beating sanctions called ‘Everyone has their Own Route: The Logistics of a Changed World’.</p> <p>Pechorin is the latest in a series of unexplained deaths among Russian powerbrokers from just before and during the war.</p> <p>In February the corporation’s CEO Igor Nosov, 43, died suddenly from a “stroke”.</p> <p>There was also an Arctic linked to the death of Yevgeny Zinichev, 55, Emergencies Minister and a former Putin bodyguard.</p> <p>A year ago he perished in a mystery fall at a waterfall in the Russian Arctic.</p> <p>He was being groomed by Putin as his possible successor, some experts say, and there have been claims from a friend that he was murdered.</p> <p>Putin appeared distraught at his funeral.</p> <p>Meanwhile, one report said the chairman of Lukoil - Russia’s second largest oil company - was “beaten” before he was “thrown out of a window”, however this is not confirmed officially.</p>

Putin arrived at the elite Central Clinical Hospital very soon after Maganov's body was found to pay his last respects to final Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who had died at the hospital.

In July, Yuri Voronov, 61, head of a transport and logistics company for a Gazprom-linked company, was found dead in his swimming pool, with a leading friend who is a top criminologist warning of foul play.

Two more deaths of Gazprom-linked executives were reported in elite homes near St Petersburg amid suspicions that apparent suicides may have been murders.

Alexander Tyulakov, 61, a senior Gazprom financial and security official at deputy general director level, was discovered by his lover the day after war started in Ukraine in February.

His neck was in a noose in his £500,000 home .

Yet reports say he had been badly beaten shortly before he "took his own life", leading to speculation he was under intense pressure.

KILLER IN THE KREMLIN

In the same elite Leninsky gated housing development in Leningrad region three weeks earlier, Leonid Shulman, 60, head of transport at Gazprom Invest, was found dead with multiple stab wounds in a pool of blood on his bathroom floor.

Billionaire Alexander Subbotin, 43, also linked to Kremlin-friendly energy giant Lukoil where he was a top manager, was found dead in May after "taking advice from shamans".

One theory is that Subbotin - who also owned a shipping company - was poisoned by toad venom triggering a heart attack.

In April, wealthy Vladislav Avayev, 51, a former Kremlin official, appeared to have taken his own life after killing his wife Yelena, 47, and daughter, 13.

He had high level links to leading Russian financial institution Gazprombank.

Friends have disputed reports that he was jealous after his wife admitted she was pregnant by their driver.

There are claims he had access to the financial secrets of the Kremlin elite.

Several days later multimillionaire Sergey Protosenya, 55, was found hanged in Spain.

He was a former deputy chairman of Novatek, a company also closely linked to the Kremlin.

His wife Natalia and daughter Maria had been hacked to death in their beds with an axe in the Lloret de Mar on Spain's Costa Brava, according to reports.

As with Avayev, it is suggested this may have been an assassination made to appear a murder-and-suicide.

Last week a mobile phone multi-millionaire and his wife were found stabbed to death in another case that has raised questions.

Naked Yevgeny Palant, 47, and his wife Olga, 50, both Ukrainian-born, were found with multiple knife wounds by their daughter Polina, 20.

Immediate briefing to the media claimed the woman took her own life in a jealous rage after Palant said he was leaving her.

Yet this was strongly disputed by the couple's best friend.

HEADLINE	09/12 Mystery: some people don't get Covid
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/the-mystery-of-why-some-people-dont-get-covid/
GIST	<p>WE ALL KNOW a “Covid virgin,” or “Novid,” someone who has defied all logic in dodging the coronavirus. But beyond judicious caution, sheer luck, or a lack of friends, could the secret to these people’s immunity be found nestled in their genes? And could it hold the key to fighting the virus?</p> <p>In the early days of the pandemic, a small, tight-knit community of scientists from around the world set up an international consortium, called the COVID Human Genetic Effort, whose goal was to search for a genetic explanation as to why some people were becoming severely sick with Covid while others got off with a mild case of the sniffles.</p> <p>After a while, the group noticed that some people weren’t getting infected at all—despite repeated and intense exposures. The most intriguing cases were the partners of people who became really ill and ended up in intensive care. “We learned about a few spouses of those people that—despite taking care of their husband or wife, without having access to face masks—apparently did not contract infection,” says András Spaan, a clinical microbiologist at Rockefeller University in New York.</p> <p>Spaan was tasked with setting up an arm of the project to investigate these seemingly immune individuals. But they had to find a good number of them first. So the team put out a paper in Nature Immunology in which they outlined their endeavor, with a discreet final line mentioning that “subjects from all over the world are welcome.”</p> <p>The response, Spaan says, was overwhelming. “We literally received thousands of emails,” he says. The sheer volume rushing to sign up forced them to set up a multilingual online screening survey. So far, they’ve had about 15,000 applications from all over the world.</p> <p>The theory that these people might have preexisting immunity is supported by historical examples. There are genetic mutations that confer natural immunity to HIV, norovirus, and a parasite that causes recurring malaria. Why would Covid be any different, the team rationalized? Yet in the long history of immunology, the concept of inborn resistance against infection is a fairly new and esoteric one. Only a few scientists even take an interest. “It’s such a niche field, that even within the medical and research fields, it’s a bit pooh-poohed on,” says Donald Vinh, an associate professor in the Department of Medicine at McGill University in Canada. Geneticists don’t recognize it as proper genetics, nor immunologists as proper immunology, he says. This is despite there being a clear therapeutic goal. “If you can figure out why somebody cannot get infected, well, then you can figure out how to prevent people from getting infected,” says Vinh.</p> <p>But finding immune people is an increasingly tricky task. While many have volunteered, only a small minority fit the narrow criteria of probably having encountered the virus yet having no antibodies against it (which would indicate an infection). The most promising candidates are those who have defied all logic in not catching Covid despite being at high risk: health care workers constantly exposed to Covid-positive patients, or those who lived with—or even better, shared a bed with—people confirmed to be infected.</p> <p>By the time the team started looking for suitable people, they were working against mass vaccination programs too.</p> <p>“On the one hand, a lot of people were getting vaccinated, which is great, don’t get me wrong,” says Vinh. “But those are not the people we want.” On the other hand, seeking out the unvaccinated “does invite a bit of a fringe population.” Of the thousands that flooded in after the call, about 800 to 1,000 recruits fit that tight bill.</p> <p>Then the highly infectious Omicron variant arrived. “Omicron has really ruined this project, I have to be honest with you,” says Vinh. It dramatically reduced their pool of candidates. But Spaan views Omicron’s</p>

desecration in a more positive light: that some recruits survived the Omicron waves really lends support to the existence of innate resistance.

Across the Atlantic, in Dublin, Ireland, another member of the group—Cliona O’Farrelly, a professor of comparative immunology at Trinity College Dublin—set about recruiting health care workers at a hospital in Dublin. Of the cohort she managed to assemble, Omicron did throw a wrench in the works—half of the people whose DNA they had sent off to be sequenced ended up getting infected with the variant, obviating their presumed resistance. To spread awareness of their research and find more suitable people, O’Farrelly went on the radio and expanded the call to the rest of the country. Again, enthusiasm abounded: More than 16,000 people came forward who claimed to have defied infection. “We’re now trying to deal with all of that,” she says. “I’m hoping that we’ll have one or two hundred from those, which will be unbelievably valuable.”

Now that they have a substantial cohort, the group will take a twofold approach to hunting for a genetic explanation for resistance. First, they’ll blindly run every person’s genome through a computer to see if any gene variation starts to come up frequently. At the same time, they’ll look specifically at an existing list of genes they suspect might be the culprits—genes that if different from usual would just make sense to infer resistance. An example is the gene that codes for the ACE2 receptor, a protein on the surface of cells that the virus uses to slip inside.

The consortium has about 50 sequencing hubs around the world, from Poland to Brazil to Italy, where the data will be crunched. While enrollment is still ongoing, at a certain point, they will have to decide they have enough data to move deeper into their research. “That’s going to be the moment we have people with clear-cut mutations in the genes that make sense biologically,” says Spaan.

Once they come up with a list of gene candidates, it’ll then be a case of narrowing and narrowing that list down. They’ll go through the list one by one, testing each gene’s impact on defenses against Covid in cell models. That process will take between four to six months, Vinh estimates.

Another complication could arise from the global nature of the project; the cohort will be massively heterogeneous. People in Slavic countries won’t necessarily have the same genetic variation that confers resistance as people of Southeast Asian ethnicity. Again, Spaan views this diversity as a plus: “This means that we can correct for ethnic origin in our analysis,” he says. But it also means, Vinh says, that they’re not just looking for one needle in one haystack—“you’re looking for the golden needle and the silver needle and the bronze needle, and you’re looking in the factory of haystacks.”

It’s unlikely to be one gene that confers immunity, but rather an array of genetic variations coming together. “I don’t think it’ll come down to a one-liner on the Excel sheet that says, ‘This is the gene,’” says Vinh. “If it happens to be a single gene, we will be flooded.”

After all this work is done, natural genetic resistance will likely turn out to be extremely rare. Still, should they find protective genes, it could help to inform future treatments. There’s good reason to think this: In the 1990s, a group of sex workers in Nairobi, Kenya, defied all logic in failing to become infected with HIV during [three years of follow-up testing](#). It was discovered that some were [carrying a genetic mutation](#) that produces a messed-up version of the protein called the CCR5 receptor, one of the proteins that HIV uses to gain entry to a cell and make copies of itself.

Having the mutation means HIV can’t latch onto cells, giving natural resistance. This then inspired maraviroc, an antiretroviral used to treat infection, as well as the most promising “[cure](#)” for HIV, where two patients received stem cell transplants from a donor carrying the mutation and became HIV free.

It’s also possible that genetics doesn’t tell the full story of those who resist infection against all odds. For some, the reason for their protection might rest instead in their immune system. During the first wave of the pandemic, Mala Maini, a professor of viral immunology at University College London, and her colleagues intensively monitored a group of health care workers who theoretically probably should have been infected with Covid, but for some reason hadn’t been. The team also looked at blood samples from a separate cohort of people, taken well before the pandemic. On closer inspection of the two groups’

samples, Maini's team found a secret weapon lying in their blood: memory T cells—immune cells that form the second line of defense against a foreign invader. These cells, lying dormant from previous dalliances with other coronaviruses, such as the ones that cause the common cold, could be providing cross-protectivity against SARS-CoV-2, her team hypothesized in their [paper in Nature](#) in November 2021.

[Other studies](#) have supported the theory that these cross-reactive T cells exist and may explain why some people avoid infection. Maini compares the way these memory T cells might quickly attack SARS-CoV-2 to driving a car. If the car is unlike one you've ever driven before—a manual for a life-long automatic driver—it would take you a while to get to grips with the controls. But assume the pre-existing T cells are accustomed to automatics, and a SARS-CoV-2 encounter is like hopping into the driver's seat of one, and you can see how they would launch a much quicker and stronger immune attack.

A previous seasonal coronavirus infection or an abortive Covid infection in the first wave—meaning an infection that failed to take hold—could create T cells that offer this preexisting immunity. But Maini points out a crucial caveat: This does not mean that you can skip the vaccine on the potential basis that you're carrying these T cells.

More recently, Maini and her colleague Leo Swadling published [another paper](#) that looked at cells from the airways of volunteers, which were sampled and frozen before the pandemic. They figured, if the infection is getting shut down so quickly, then surely the cells responsible must be ready and waiting at the first site of infection. The cohort in the study was small—just 10 people—but six out of the 10 had cross-reactive T cells sitting in their airways.

Off the back of her research, Maini is working on a vaccine with researchers at the University of Oxford that induces these T cells specifically in the mucus membranes of the airway, and which could offer broad protection against not only SARS-CoV-2 but a variety of coronaviruses. Such a vaccine could stop the Covid virus wriggling out of the existing vaccines' reach, because while the spike protein—the focus of current vaccines—is liable to mutate and change, T cells target bits of viruses that are highly similar across all human and animal coronaviruses.

And a mucosal vaccine could prepare these T cells in the nose and throat, the ground zero of infection, giving Covid the worst shot possible at taking root. “We’re quite optimistic that that sort of approach could provide better protection against new emerging variants, and ideally also against a new transfer of a new animal zoonotic virus,” says Maini.

As for Spaan and his team, they also have to entertain the possibility that, after the slog, genetic resistance against SARS-CoV-2 turns out to be a pipedream. “That’s our fear—that we will do all this and we will find nothing,” says Vinh. “And that’s OK. Because that’s science, right?” O’Farrelly, on the other hand, has undeterred optimism they’ll find *something*. “You just can’t have people die and not have the equivalent at the other end of the spectrum.”

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HEADLINE	09/12 Who are America's missing workers?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/business/economy/labor-participation-covid.html
GIST	<p>As the United States emerges from the pandemic, employers have been desperate to hire. But while demand for goods and services has rebounded, the supply of labor has fallen short, holding back the economy.</p> <p>More than two years after the Covid-19 recession officially ended, some sectors haven't found the workers they need to operate at capacity. Only in August did the work force return to its prepandemic size, which is millions short of where it would have been had it continued to grow at its prepandemic rate.</p> <p>In simple numbers, some of that gap is due to Covid's death toll: more than a million people, about 260,000 of them short of retirement age. In addition, a sharp slowdown in legal immigration has pared the</p>

potential work force by 3.2 million, relative to its trajectory before 2017, according to calculations by economists at J.P. Morgan.

But the problem isn't just that population growth has stalled. Even with [an uptick in August](#), the share of Americans working or [actively looking for work](#) is 62.4 percent, compared with 63.4 percent in February 2020.

"It's my sense that the most important reason that the labor market feels so hot right now is that we have so many fewer people in it," said Wendy Edelberg, director of the Hamilton Project, an economic policy center at the Brookings Institution. "Demand largely recovered, and we didn't have the supply."

Unraveling the causes of that lingering reluctance is difficult, but it's possible to identify a few major groups who are on the sidelines.

People at retirement age, who had been staying in the work force longer as longevity increased before the pandemic, dropped out at disproportionate rates and haven't returned. More puzzlingly, men in their prime working years, from 25 to 54, have retreated from the work force relative to February 2020, while women have bounced back. Magnifying those disparities are two crosscutting factors: the long-term health complications from Covid-19, and a lagging return for workers without college degrees.

Thomas Strait would count himself among those prompted by the pandemic to retire earlier than planned.

Mr. Strait spent most of his career in the restaurant industry, until he decided to switch professions in his 50s. After six years of classes, he started work as a cardiac sonographer at a hospital near his home in San Diego. But in December 2019, the hospital said he'd need to live closer to be on call, and he didn't want to move.

While looking for another job, Mr. Strait talked to a financial adviser, who said that he could retire if he downsized and moved somewhere with a lower cost of living. And as the pandemic raged, that started to look like a better idea than working in health care.

"As Covid got worse, I was leery about going back into the medical field," said Mr. Strait, who is 63. "I'm pretty healthy, but I was concerned about just being in a hospital surrounded by Covid, and I didn't want to fall prey to that."

So he moved to Port Charlotte, Fla., with enough money from the sale of his house to buy another in cash. He gets offers to go back to work at twice his previous salary, but hasn't felt the need to; cooking and gardening are keeping him busy.

"I could jump back in, but then I got used to being retired," Mr. Strait said. "I keep my credentials ready in case I want to buy a boat or something."

For decades, a large generation aging into retirement has been the strongest factor dragging down overall labor force participation. The pandemic, which made workplaces particularly dangerous for older people, supercharged that trend. At the same time, the value of homes and 401(k) accounts ballooned in 2021, bringing retirement within reach for many.

Eliza Forsythe, an assistant professor of economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, found in a [recent paper](#) that these accelerated retirements may have made it possible for younger workers to move out of customer-facing jobs in industries like food service and retailing. That created a bigger gap in those sectors — visible in their outsize rate of job openings.

"People were retiring and opening up these positions," Dr. Forsythe said. "Employers are searching for them, so if you were in one of these difficult lower-paid jobs, there's more opportunity for you to move up."

The next major category of workers who haven't come back is men 25 to 54, a group that generally isn't still in school or retired. Their participation rate in August was 88.6 percent, below where it stood in February 2020. Over the same period, the rate for women in that age group rose to 77.2 percent.

Experts aren't sure what's behind these numbers, but they say it's probably a mix of factors.

Women have outpaced men in earning college degrees in recent years, and labor force participation by college graduates has recovered since the pandemic shutdowns; for those with less education, it has not. (In households where both partners lack college diplomas, women still tend to be the ones who drop out to supplement unreliable child care, according to an [analysis](#) by the Brookings Institution. In households where at least one partner has a degree, women have started to step forward as sole breadwinners.)

But the trend may also be the continuation of a [longer-term decline](#) in male labor force participation that began in the 1960s, partly because so much manufacturing has been automated or moved to other countries. And one barrier disproportionately affecting men is the persistent impact of a criminal record: By age 35, 46 percent of unemployed men also have a criminal conviction, according to a [recent study](#) published in Science Advances.

Participation for men had started to turn around in 2016, when the slow recovery from the Great Recession began to translate into higher pay and a stronger motivation to work. But wage growth hasn't been as swift for most workers over the past year when accounting for inflation. And what appears to be an abundance of jobs may look different to people who are out of work: In a survey this spring by the consulting firm McKinsey, 34 percent of unemployed respondents cited a lack of available jobs as a barrier.

"A lot of workers are still disconnected, and we're just not seeing them come on," said Jesse Wheeler, an economic analyst with the polling and analysis firm Morning Consult. "It's unclear how all of them are making ends meet, but I think it has a lot to do with consolidation of households and cutting costs. It would've been difficult to change if they weren't forced into it."

Morning Consult found in August that prime-age adults who aren't working cited a variety of often overlapping reasons for not wanting jobs. In a monthly poll of 2,200 people, 40 percent said they believed that they wouldn't be able to find a job with enough flexibility, while 38 percent were limited by family situations and personal obligations. But the biggest category, at 43 percent, was medical conditions.

Other data suggest some of that is due to long-term complications from Covid-19, although estimates of how many people have been knocked out of the work force by Covid range tremendously.

Katie Bach, a Brookings Institution fellow, [put the impact](#) at two million to four million full-time workers, based on her interpretation of the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey and other research. (The total affected may be larger, with many who suffer from long Covid reducing their hours rather than stopping work.) A Federal Reserve economist [didn't specify](#) a number, but observed that even as Covid-related hospitalizations and deaths receded, the share of people saying they were not able to work because of illness or disability had remained elevated in Labor Department data after spiking in early 2021.

Another analysis, in a paper [published](#) by the National Bureau of Economic Research, found that people who'd taken a week off for health-related reasons in 2020 and 2021 were 7 percent less likely to be in the labor force a year later — which equates to about 500,000 workers.

Whatever the magnitude, the effects are likely to be significant and long-lasting. Vaccines provide [imperfect protection](#) against getting long Covid, studies suggest, and other post-viral diseases have proven difficult to recover from. "I certainly don't think the worst is behind us," Ms. Bach said.

Yasmin Schamiloglu, 25, doesn't know when her case of long Covid will allow her to return to work.

She contracted Covid in January and had relatively mild symptoms. She was able to do her job helping researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with community engagement remotely for a while,

	<p>and then started trying to go back into the office. Her managers were understanding, but every hour at work was exhausting, and the fatigue soon became too much to bear.</p> <p>“Now I know that inadequate rest is correlated for higher risk of long Covid, so I wish I had just taken that time off to rest, because I could have,” Ms. Schamiloglu said.</p> <p>Finally, she decided to resign in August, living at her mother’s house while she tried to recover. She’s had to defer a graduate program in counseling, and she hopes to be well enough to start next fall. But others with the condition have cycled through periods of improvement and relapse, many without the support Ms. Schamiloglu is grateful to have from her family, making it difficult to plan a professional future.</p> <p>“It doesn’t bode well for the work force in the coming decades,” Ms. Schamiloglu said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 As losses mount, so too Russian discord
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/world/europe/russia-tv-moscow-ukraine-war.html https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&module=&state=default&region=footer&context=breakout link back to briefing
GIST	<p>As Russia suffered its most humiliating defeat since the initial stage of the war in Ukraine, cracks emerged in the official narrative as lawmakers and pundits on state television cast doubt on Moscow’s prospects.</p> <p>While some urged the Kremlin to start peace negotiations, others demanded that its forces double down. The divergence of views, even on tightly controlled state television networks, highlighted how Moscow’s narrative has quickly shifted from a conviction that it was only a matter of time before Russia subjugated Ukraine to a sense of alarm over the rapid progress of Kyiv’s forces. And it was a contrast from the muted response after Russia’s drive to take Kyiv failed in the spring.</p> <p>On Friday, as the Russian front line in northeastern Ukraine collapsed, Boris Nadezhdin, a Russian municipal lawmaker, told viewers of a political talk show on NTV, a state-owned television channel, what had once been unspeakable: Moscow cannot, under current conditions, win this war.</p> <p>“We are now at the point when we have to understand that it’s absolutely impossible to defeat Ukraine using those resources and colonial war methods with which Russia is trying to fight,” said Mr. Nadezhdin, who serves as a municipal deputy in a town near Moscow. “The Russian army is fighting against a strong army that is fully supported by the most powerful countries in the economic and technological sense.”</p> <p>Mr. Nadezhdin suggested that negotiations for peace should begin — a suggestion vehemently refuted by others in the studio, who argued that Russia cannot give up its existential fight against NATO.</p> <p>“We have been dealt a very serious psychological blow,” said Aleksandr Kazakov, a member of the Duma, Russia’s lower house of parliament. “We must destroy the infrastructure that is being used for military purposes.”</p> <p>Others questioned the main ideological pretext that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia used to launch the invasion — that Russians and Ukrainians constitute one nation.</p> <p>“We can’t expect their affection if we tell the Ukrainians that they don’t exist as an ethnicity, that there isn’t a Ukrainian language,” said Viktor Olevich, a political scientist.</p> <p>Speaking on a talk show on Rossiya-1, Russia’s main state television channel, Aleksei Fenenko, a lecturer at Moscow State University, said that Moscow must concede that it faces a formidable adversary in Ukraine.</p>

“We have to admit that Ukraine has rallied against us,” [Mr. Fenenko said](#). “We must treat it as a serious and dangerous adversary.”

Vitaly Tretyakov, a political scientist, warned viewers on Monday that unfulfilled expectations about the war might create social upheaval if Russians realize that their country is losing.

“There is an enormous confidence in our victory, but this confidence should be supported by real advancements,” he said [on Thursday on Rossiya-1](#).

“Social tensions can emerge not because the population would speak against the operation,” he said, “but because they might ask why it is not active, why there is not victory, no advancements?”

More than 40 local elected officials across Russia signed a two-sentence petition on Monday that ended with: “We demand the resignation of Vladimir Putin from the post of president of the Russian Federation!”

The petition, pushed by opponents of the Ukraine invasion, had no practical impact, and it was roundly ignored in Russia’s state-controlled media. But it was striking in its very existence, showing that despite the Kremlin’s extraordinary crackdown on dissent, Ukraine’s counteroffensive successes have left opponents of President Vladimir V. Putin newly emboldened — and his supporters looking for someone else to blame.

Pro-war commentators and politicians have pointed to the military leadership or senior officials, saying they have not waged the war with sufficient decisiveness and competence, or have not delivered all the facts to Mr. Putin. Longtime Kremlin critics have seized on that discord, and Russia’s setbacks at the front, to take the risk of speaking out against Mr. Putin.

“There is now hope that Ukraine will end this war,” said Ksenia Torstrem, a member of a municipal council in St. Petersburg who helped organize the petition and called Ukrainian advances an “inspiring factor” for it. “We decided we needed to put pressure on from all sides.”

On Russian state television, where criticism of the Kremlin is rare, supporters of the war are increasingly pointing fingers over what they cast as a disorganized and insufficiently concerted invasion; others are raising the idea of [suing for peace](#). With anger spreading over the embarrassing withdrawal of Russian troops from more than a thousand square miles of northeastern Ukraine, one senior lawmaker said in an interview that an “urgent adjustment” to the war effort was needed.

In a phone interview on Monday, that lawmaker, Konstantin F. Zatulin, a senior member of Parliament in Mr. Putin’s United Russia party, laid out the stakes.

Mr. Zatulin described the retreat by Russian troops as doing “very serious damage to the very idea of this special military operation,” using the term that the Kremlin has adopted for the war. But he also cautioned that if criticism of the war effort from across the political spectrum spirals out of control, it could lead to unforeseen consequences, citing the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Soviet collapse of 1991.

“It must be underlined that this criticism should not go overboard,” he said. “Otherwise, it could spark an uncontrollable reaction.”

Mr. Zatulin insisted that any optimism by people hoping that Mr. Putin would be toppled was “very much premature.” Ukraine’s successes, he said, might prompt the Kremlin to escalate its war effort to try to deliver Ukraine a decisive defeat, though he added that he did not expect this to mean “nuclear war.”

“What now appears to some to be the success of the Ukrainian side could in fact lead to the last drop that will lead to the beginning of a war for real,” Mr. Zatulin said. “Given that Russia truly did not use the full force of its abilities, nothing remains to be done other than to demonstrate this force.”

There is no evidence that Mr. Putin’s hold on power might be weakening, and the Kremlin on Monday said the invasion would “be continued until the original goals are achieved.”

Still, there were gathering signs that Russia’s elite was unsettled by the army’s retreat and uncertain how to proceed.

A member of the lower house of Parliament, Mikhail Sheremet, [told](#) a Russian news outlet that the military would not succeed in Ukraine “without a full mobilization.” It was an implicit criticism of Mr. Putin’s refusal to carry out a nationwide draft, a step that Russian proponents of an escalated war effort have [long been demanding](#).

The leader of a pro-Putin party, Sergei Mironov, [praised](#) the strikes against Ukrainian infrastructure targets Sunday night that left parts of the country without power, but complained that they “should have been carried out two to three months ago.”

And on the social network Telegram, where pro-war Russian military bloggers have gained huge followings, the grumbling also continued. “Stop whining,” Yevgeny Poddubny, a war correspondent for Russian state television, posted, referring to those who were worried about an escalating war.

But a senior member of the upper house, Andrei Klimov, tried to push back against the voices calling for all-out war, telling reporters that he saw no “necessity” for a mobilization or for martial law to be declared.

Opponents of Mr. Putin have been heartened by the discord.

“Many have the hope that something will finally break,” Ivan I. Kurilla, a historian at the European University at St. Petersburg and a critic of Mr. Putin, said in a phone interview. “We are probably wrong, it’s probably not yet time, but since everyone has been waiting for half a year for something to crack, this hope is very strong.”

After the invasion in February, Mr. Putin led the most intense crackdown on dissent since taking power two decades ago, signing a censorship law that made any criticism of the war effort — or even calling it a war rather than a “special military operation” — a potential crime. Thousands of journalists, activists and others fled the country, while just about all the prominent independent news media outlets still operating inside Russia were forced to shut down. Leading opposition figures who refused to flee [were jailed](#).

So when a group of municipal council members from Mr. Putin’s home city of St. Petersburg published a statement calling for the president to be removed from office for treason last week, it was a shocking move in an environment in which fear of imprisonment has driven almost all criticism of Mr. Putin underground.

Some of those council members now face fines for “discrediting” the military and government, but in Moscow, members of another municipal council followed suit in calling for Mr. Putin to resign. And over the weekend, Ms. Torstrem, the St. Petersburg representative, wrote to fellow opposition-minded local deputies in a Telegram chat group: “I also want to do something.”

She was convinced to speak out, she said, both by colleagues who had already published anti-Putin statements and by the military advances of Ukrainian troops. She also noted the unhappiness in the pro-Putin camp, saying it put the Kremlin in a particularly delicate spot.

Ms. Torstrem, who is 38, helped draft the petition issued Monday calling on Mr. Putin to step down. She was careful not to mention the war, to avoid making any of the signatories vulnerable under the laws that criminalize criticism of it. The petition said only that Mr. Putin’s actions “do harm to the future of Russia and its citizens.”

The petition had 19 signatories from Moscow and St. Petersburg when she published it on Twitter Monday morning. By the end of the day, the number had grown to more than 40, including municipal representatives from the remote city of Yakutsk in Siberia and from Samara on the Volga River.

She acknowledged that it was unclear how, in practice, the petition might help precipitate Mr. Putin's resignation. But one signatory, Vasily Khoroshilov, a municipal deputy in Moscow, said the idea was to send a message to powerful opponents of Mr. Putin that they would have support among the Russian public.

"The radical patriots have also started to doubt the correctness of the path that is being followed," Mr. Khoroshilov, 38, said in a phone interview. "Some forces in the highest echelons of power might take some kind of decisive action if they see support among the people."

Mr. Putin's core supporters appear to be focused on the notion that any problems in the war are not his fault, but that he was being misled by senior officials or the military leadership.

That was the message sent by Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman ruler of the southern Russian region of Chechnya. He [posted a rambling voice message](#) to his Telegram account over the weekend and warned that if the military did not change its strategy "today or tomorrow," he would be forced "to speak to the Defense Ministry's leadership and the country's leadership to explain to them the real situation on the ground."

Mr. Zatulin, the senior lawmaker, said that many in Russia believed that "Putin was wrongly informed and doesn't know everything, that he was deluded."

"The president himself maintains his authority and is the foundation of stability at this moment," Mr. Zatulin said.

But, he cautioned, "it's clear that any system has its limits."

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HEADLINE	09/12 FEMA Emergency Food, Shelter Program
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/12/biden-asks-more-money-transport-illegal-immigrants/
GIST	<p>It's not just Texas that's busing illegal immigrants deep into the country — Uncle Sam is doing it too by paying nonprofit organizations tens of millions of dollars to help transport and settle migrants into more communities.</p> <p>The Biden administration is sending the money through the Federal Emergency Management Agency via a program created in the 1980s to deal with homelessness.</p> <p>In recent years, that homeless mission has been overtaken by the task of helping illegal immigrants who have been caught and released at the border take their first steps toward settling in the U.S.</p> <p>President Biden asked this month for an infusion of cash for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program at FEMA. He said the border situation has become too much to handle with current funding.</p> <p>He also sought an infusion for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement so the deportation agency can help shuttle migrants around the country, and he asked for \$1.8 billion more for the Health and Human Services Department to house illegal immigrant children and provide assistance more broadly to other border jumpers.</p> <p>The requests are part of the administration's proposal for continuing government funding into fiscal 2023, which starts Oct. 1. Congress hasn't made progress on the annual spending bills and is expected to pass a continuing resolution that would maintain 2022 funding levels into the next fiscal year.</p>

Still, Mr. Biden said some needs are urgent, and immigration spending is part of that. In a document submitted to Congress, the White House blamed “emerging needs along the southern border.”

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, the top Republican on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs appropriations subcommittee, said the money the White House is requesting doesn’t begin to address the fundamentals of the border crisis.

“The Biden administration needs to address the crisis at the border more broadly than in any CR anomaly,” she told The Washington Times in a statement. “We have surpassed over 2 million migrants for the fiscal year, yet they continue to avoid the decisions that can help us actually stem this crisis.”

Mr. Biden is more than a year and a half into the migrant surge. Although the overall monthly numbers have dipped, they are still running at a near-record pace. In July, U.S. officials encountered nearly 200,000 unauthorized migrants at the border.

Most were caught and then released.

Texas, which has been slammed by the surge, has been busing migrants to Democratic-run cities as a way of sharing the pain. The state is sending willing migrants to Chicago, New York and the District of Columbia. Arizona is also busing migrants across its borders.

The Biden administration said those efforts undermine the Homeland Security Department’s ability to keep track of the released migrants.

Instead, the administration wants to rely on the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. The 1980s-era homeless assistance program has become a chief vehicle for helping migrants caught and released at the border get where they want to go.

The program pays for bus, plane or train travel at economy seat pricing. It also helps pay for housing and food.

The program is governed by a board made up of nonprofits such as the United Way and Catholic Charities. That board decides how to spend the taxpayer money, which experts said effectively shields decisions about migrant transportation from the public.

“This is taxpayer money,” said Andrew “Art” Arthur, a legal fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies. “The American people have a right to know where this money is going.”

He said that could be particularly relevant as leaders in New York and the District blame Texas for flooding their jurisdictions with illegal immigrants. He acknowledged that the federal government also is transporting some migrants.

A woman who answered the phone at the Emergency Food and Shelter Program said workers have been directed to refer all press inquiries to FEMA. When The Times contacted FEMA, the agency referred questions to the White House, which didn’t respond to The Times for this article.

The focus on border jumpers has overtaken the Emergency Food and Shelter Program’s mission of helping the homeless.

In the current fiscal year, the homeless portion of the program was allocated \$130 million and the migrant portion received \$150 million, Mr. Arthur said.

Given the secrecy, it’s impossible to know how many migrants the Emergency Food and Shelter Program has paid to be moved or how much has been spent specifically on transportation.

	<p>Texas announced on Friday that it had crossed the 10,000-migrant mark in its busing campaign, with 7,900 sent to the District, 2,200 to New York and 300 to Chicago.</p> <p>As of mid-August, when the total was 8,000, the state had spent \$14 million on the effort, according to local news reports.</p> <p>Critics say the state is paying for a job the federal government should be doing.</p> <p>Mr. Biden is certainly trying.</p> <p>In addition to more Emergency Food and Shelter Program money, he requested permission to shift funding within ICE toward “transportation and removal” operations.</p> <p>ICE regularly flies migrants to destinations in the U.S., but the pace of those flights has increased dramatically with the border surge and catch-and-release policies.</p> <p>The increased flights have renewed attention, with reports of “secret” late-night arrivals that local reporters said seem aimed at keeping the extent of the migrant movements under wraps.</p> <p>Mr. Arthur said the government’s willingness to pay for migrants’ transportation is another incentive for jumping the border.</p> <p>“Should American taxpayers be spending money for someone who paid \$7,000 to a smuggler to come to the United States?” he said. “They’ve got money. They wouldn’t be here if they didn’t.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Spike in ‘quiet quitting’ rocks job industry
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/12/spike-quiet-quitting-rocks-job-industry-pandemic-fl/
GIST	<p>Half of U.S. workers responding to a recent Gallup survey now consider themselves “quiet quitters” — employees who do the minimum necessary to keep their jobs.</p> <p>The percentage of disengaged workers has risen steadily since 2019, according to Gallup.</p> <p>Experts attribute the spike to large numbers of managers quitting during the pandemic, a struggling job market, and the unhappiness of young people with remote work.</p> <p>“Life changed dramatically with COVID, and now, as employees are returning to the physical workspace, they are having to learn how to re-engage socially, while having the stress of paying more for clothes, gas and food,” said Karen S. Elliott, a labor and employment attorney at Richmond, Virginia-based Eckert Seamans.</p> <p>The concept of quiet quitting is also known as “working your wage” or “phoning it in.” Some analysts call it the “80-20 rule,” where 20% of employees do 80% of the work.</p> <p>According to economists, it’s an old trend in the labor market — but one that was poised for a surge as more Americans sought better work-life balance even before the pandemic.</p> <p>James E. Hartley, an economics professor at Mount Holyoke College, says author Herman Melville wrote about it in his 1853 short story “Bartleby the Scrivener.”</p> <p>“There is nothing new about the phenomenon,” Mr. Hartley said. “Bartleby ‘quiet quits’ by responding ‘I prefer not to’ any time he is asked to do anything at his job. He never formally quits or leaves the office; he just stops doing work.”</p>

More recently, cartoonist Scott Adams satirized the attitude in a 1990s Dilbert comic strip that depicted office slob Wally taking an “in-cubicle sabbatical.”

When the titular Dilbert asks him how long he has been doing this, Wally replies, “Two years. You’re the first person to notice.”

Sean Higgins, a research associate at the libertarian Competitive Enterprise Institute, says today’s quiet quitters don’t even share Wally’s concern to “look busy” when the boss is around.

“With so many more people working remotely now and therefore not being watched by management, they feel more freedom to put work aside when they feel like it,” Mr. Higgins said. “If you’re working from home, you feel less attached to your job, so why work as hard?”

Daniel Lacalle, a professor of global economics at IE Business School in Spain, says the fact that the labor participation rate remains one percentage point below its February 2020 level confirms the decline in motivation.

Although unemployment stayed low at 3.7% last month, the economist pointed out Americans are still experiencing negative real wage growth.

“Also, private wealth is falling with equity and bond markets,” Mr. Lacalle said in an email.

Industry experts believe companies that rely on remote and hybrid work will experience the trend longer than others.

“Remote working means distractions at home, lack of subtle but important non-verbal clues and a depressing absence of interpersonal relationships,” said business consultant Hans Dau, CEO of the Mitchell Madison Group. “The image of the information worker with a laptop on the beach may not be so desirable after all.”

It falls to managers to figure out how to motivate their employees again, the experts say.

Jeff Safenowitz, CEO of the dog-grooming company Barkbus, says bosses could use pet-friendly policies to make offices more appealing.

In a survey last month, Barkbus found that 86% of employers said they looked forward to working more and 50% said they made new friends when they brought their pets to work.

“Pets promote productivity,” Mr. Safenowitz said.

Meagan E. Brock Baskin, an associate professor of management at Florida Gulf Coast University, says workers will need time to re-engage.

“Specifically, the pandemic triggered a shattering of assumptions about the way the world works and how life should be lived,” Ms. Brock Baskin said. “When something shatters, we have to put it back together, and employees all over the world are putting their lives and priorities back together in different ways.”

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HEADLINE	09/13 Deadly clashes erupt: Azerbaijan, Armenia
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/13/deadly-clashes-erupt-in-disputed-territory-between-azerbaijan-and-armenia
GIST	Clashes have erupted between Azerbaijani and Armenian troops, according to Russian news agencies, in a resumption of decades-old hostilities linked to the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan, which re-established full control over the territory in a six-week conflict in 2020, acknowledged casualties among its forces. Armenia made no mention of losses, but said clashes persisted overnight.

The Yerevan government said it would invoke a cooperation agreement with Russia and appeal to a Russia-led security bloc, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, as well as the UN security council, Interfax reported.

Armenian prime minister Nikol Pashinyan has called Russian president Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron and United States secretary of state Antony Blinken to discuss the situation.

Blinken urged an immediate end to hostilities for which each side has blamed the other.

“Several positions, shelters and reinforced points of the Azerbaijan armed forces ... came under intense shelling from weapons of various calibres, including mortars, by units of the Armenian army,” the agencies quoted a statement by Azerbaijan’s Defence Ministry as saying.

“As a result, there are losses in personnel and damage to military infrastructure.”

Azerbaijani statements said Armenian forces had been engaged in intelligence activity on its border, moved weapons into the area and on Monday night had conducted mining operations.

It said its actions were “strictly local in nature aimed at military targets.”

Armenia’s Defence Ministry said: “Intensive shooting is continuing – started as a result of a large-scale provocation by the Azerbaijani side. Armenia’s armed forces have launched a proportionate response.”

Conflict first broke out in the late 1980s when both sides were under Soviet rule and Armenian forces captured swathes of territory near Nagorno-Karabakh - long recognised internationally as Azerbaijan’s territory, but with a large Armenian population.

Azerbaijan regained those territories in the 2020 fighting, which ended with a Russian-brokered truce and thousands of residents returning to homes from which they had fled.

The leaders of both countries have since met several times to hammer out a treaty intended to establish a lasting peace.

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HEADLINE	09/13 Day 202 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/13/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-202-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said his country’s forces had taken back 6,000 sq km (2,400 square miles) of Russian-held territory in the country’s south and east. Ukraine’s forces have continued to press their counterattack in Kharkiv, seeking to take control of almost all of the province. Ukraine’s troops headed north, reportedly recapturing towns all the way to the Russian border, and a video circulated of a Ukrainian soldier at the centre of the strategic city of Izium.• Russia’s military commanders have stopped sending new units into Ukraine after the counteroffensive, the general staff of the armed forces of Ukraine said on its Facebook page on Monday. “The military command of the Russian federation has suspended the sending of new, already formed units into the territory of Ukraine. The current situation in the theatre of operations and distrust of the higher command forced a large number of volunteers to categorically refuse the prospect of service in combat conditions.”• Russian troops have left behind stockpiles of ammunition and other supplies following Ukraine’s counteroffensive in Kharkiv oblast, the Kyiv Independent reports. The news outlet

reported that Russian soldiers dropped their weapons on the ground when they fled, with some jumping on to stolen bicycles and trying to pass for locals. One analyst estimated that more than 300 vehicles, including tanks, self-propelled mortars and supply trucks, [had been lost between 7 and 11 September](#).

- **Russia responded to the counteroffensive by launching missile strikes that cut electricity and water supplies in Kharkiv city for a second time in less than 24 hours**, knocking out both on Monday morning just hours after the city authorities had restored 80% of the utilities that had been cut overnight. Ukraine also said Russia launched 18 missile and 39 airstrikes overnight. At least four civilians were killed and 11 others wounded, the presidential office in Kyiv added.
- **Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, appeared on state TV on Monday evening, chairing a meeting on the economy at which he made no reference to the military situation and said Russia was holding up in the face of western sanctions**. "The economic blitzkrieg tactics, the onslaught they were counting on, did not work". Earlier in the day, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov had said "the military operation continues" and "it will continue until the goals that were originally set are achieved".
- **The US assesses that [Russia](#) has largely ceded its gains near Kharkiv and many retreating Russian soldiers have exited Ukraine**, moving over the border back into Russia, a senior US military official said on Monday. However, the US-based Institute for the Study of War thinktank said that "Ukraine has turned the tide in its favour, but the current counteroffensive will not end the war".
- **Ukrainian authorities have said they are capturing so many Russian prisoners of war the country is running out of space to put them**, the Associated Press reports. Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovich did not specify the number of Russian prisoners, but said the PoWs would be exchanged for Ukrainian service members held by Moscow. Military intelligence spokesperson Andrey Yusov said the captured troops included "significant" numbers of Russian officers.
- **Municipal deputies from 18 districts of Moscow and St Petersburg have signed a public statement demanding that Vladimir Putin resign**. "We, the municipal deputies of Russia, believe that the actions of President Vladimir Putin harm the future of Russia and its citizens," read the statement published by Ksenia Torstrem, the municipal deputy of the Semenovskiy district of St Petersburg. "Deputies are not yet forbidden to have an opinion. And it is also not forbidden to speak for the resignation of the president. He is not a monarch, but a hired worker, receives a salary from our taxes."

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HEADLINE	09/12 Russia withdraws from Kharkiv region
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-withdraws-more-forces-from-northeast-ukraine-as-kyiv-presses-advance-11662980194?mod=hp_lead_pos5
GIST	<p>Russia withdrew more forces from the Kharkiv region on Monday, retreating from a swath of northeastern Ukraine as Kyiv's forces continued their push into Russian-occupied territory and the government pledged that all areas seized by Moscow would be retaken.</p> <p>"The Russian occupiers are running so fast under pressure from Ukrainian soldiers that they're leaving whole ammunition arsenals behind," Ukraine's SBU intelligence service said. "We know what to do with them and will be sure to use them according to purpose—against the enemy."</p> <p>Since the start of its offensive earlier this month, Ukraine has said it has retaken about 9,000 square kilometers, or about 3,500 square miles, of territory from Moscow's forces in the region of Kharkiv, handing Russia the biggest setback since it invaded in February. That is more than one-tenth of all areas Russia gained and kept since the invasion.</p> <p>The rapid gains have caught Moscow off guard, prompting criticism among supporters of the Kremlin about the way the military campaign is being handled.</p>

Ukraine on Monday published photos of troops inspecting a warehouse filled with Russian arms and ammunition in Izyum, a city in southeastern Kharkiv that had for months served as a garrison for Russian forces.

In a report published early Monday, Ukraine said its armed forces had retaken 30 Russian-occupied settlements on Sunday alone, capitalizing on panic among Russian forces who have reportedly been fleeing the Kharkiv region and leaving equipment behind.

Sgt. Artur Shevtsov of the Dnipro-1 battalion, based near Slovyansk in eastern Ukraine, said the battalion's sixth and seventh units had taken part in the battles for Izyum and Balakliya.

Sgt. Shevtsov said soldiers who participated had talked about seizing a vast amount of abandoned Russian arms and ammunition, carrying away anything they could find.

"We are taking advantage of our momentum," he said, speaking on the phone from eastern Ukraine. "I don't know what the leadership will decide after taking Kharkiv region, but we want to press the Russians as much as possible while we can."

"Everyone is buoyed. We prepared a month for this," he said of the offensive launched at the end of August. "And now it's bringing results."

The advance slowed Monday, as Ukrainians began to consolidate control and look for collaborators and pockets of Russian troops left behind. Kyiv now faces the challenge of finding the manpower and [munitions needed to consolidate](#) and eventually extend its gains.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said late Monday that Russian missile strikes against civilian infrastructure had cut power for hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians over the past few days as Russian troops pulled back.

"This is how they react to the defeat of Russian forces in the Kharkiv region," Mr. Zelensky said.

Ukraine has signaled that it will make [major new requests for weapons](#) from the U.S. and its allies that the Kyiv government says it will need to press its offensive into 2023, according to a document shared with U.S. lawmakers and viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Kyiv's list of armaments desired include the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, which has a range of about 190 miles. The U.S. has declined to provide that system over concerns Ukraine could use it to strike Russian territory and spark a wider conflict with the West.

Senior Russian officials over the weekend conceded that [the military operation in Ukraine](#) was going badly, with pundits on state TV calling for a reassessment of Russia's military strategy and an even harsher clampdown on dissent in Ukrainian cities and towns that Moscow still occupies. Ukraine's offensive to push back Russian forces has raised questions even among pro-Kremlin propagandists who hew to the state-approved narrative.

"People who convinced President Putin that our special operation would be effective and brief, that we wouldn't strike the civilian population, that we'd come and restore order, these people basically set us up," said Boris Nadezhdin, a former Russian Duma deputy, appearing in a television talk show on Friday, the day Ukraine surged into the northern Kharkiv region.

Vitaly Ganchev, the head of the Russian-installed administration in the region, said Monday on Russian state-run news channel Rossiya 24 that Ukrainian forces vastly outnumbered Russian troops.

"If we talk about the force that was transferred to the counteroffensive of the Ukrainian army, it outnumbered our troops by about eight times, no less. Therefore, in order to preserve our personnel, it was decided to withdraw, to regroup," he said.

	<p>In a video address on Sunday, Mr. Zelensky praised the country's troops, volunteer fighters, front-line medics and intelligence officers, and urged them to continue their campaign to free Ukrainian territory.</p> <p>"The path to victory is a difficult one," he said. "But we are sure: You are capable of it. You will reach our border, all its sections. You will see our frontiers and the enemies' backs. You will see the shining of the eyes of our people and of the occupiers' heels. They will call it 'goodwill gestures.' We'll call it a victory."</p> <p>The U.K.'s Defense Ministry said Monday that Russia had likely ordered the withdrawal of its troops from the Kharkiv region areas it had occupied for months in the face of Ukraine's rapid advance, and said Russia's defenses in the south were highly vulnerable too.</p> <p>Russia had likely been forced to give priority to defensive actions across the front line amid a failure to properly resupply its forces in the southern Kherson region or bring in reinforcements needed to hold the line there. "The already limited trust deployed troops have in Russia's senior military leadership is likely to deteriorate further," the ministry said in a statement.</p> <p>Mr. Zelensky noted the impression made internationally by Ukraine's offensive. The success of the campaign could encourage Western partners to continue supplying the country with the arms and ammunition it needs to continue defending itself from Russia's war of conquest.</p> <p>"Today, your actions in the north, south and east of Ukraine are seen and noticed by all. The world is in awe. The enemy is in a panic," Mr. Zelensky said in the video statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Multiple tribal fishery disasters declared
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3631216/multiple-tribal-fishery-disaster-declared-washington/
GIST	<p>U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced nearly \$17.5 million will be used to address fishery disasters that occurred in multiple tribal salmon fisheries on the West Coast from 2014 to 2019, including Washington.</p> <p>"Sustainable and resilient fisheries play a vital role in helping tribal communities put food on the table and in supporting economic well-being," said Raimondo. "It's our hope that this disaster declaration will help the affected tribes recover from these disasters and increase their ability to combat future challenges."</p> <p>Raimondo found that the following fisheries met the requirements for a fishery disaster determination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 Fraser River & Skagit River Salmon Fisheries (the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Tulalip, Upper Skagit Tribes). • 2019 Puget Sound Fall Chum Salmon Fishery (Squaxin Island Tribe). • 2019 Klamath River Fall Chinook Salmon Fishery (Yurok Tribe). • 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019 Fraser River and Nooksack River Terminal Area Sockeye, Chinook, Chum, Coho and Pink Salmon Fishery (Lummi Nation). • 2014 and 2019 Fraser River Sockeye and Puget Sound Chum, and Coho Salmon Fishery (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe). <p>Positive determinations make these fisheries eligible for disaster assistance from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In order to allocate funding across eligible disasters, NOAA Fisheries uses commercial revenue loss information.</p> <p>"NOAA has great respect for our tribal fishery co-managers, and their knowledge, science, and history are invaluable to our work managing and restoring fisheries," said Janet Coit, assistant administrator for NOAA Fisheries. "With climate change impacts further stressing our fisheries and waterways, it is essential that we work together to take on the challenges in our ecosystems and communities."</p>

	<p>These funds are meant to improve the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of the impacted fisheries, including fishery-related infrastructure projects, habitat restoration, tribal and fishing permit buybacks, job retraining and more.</p> <p>Some fishery-related businesses impacted by this fishery disaster may also be eligible for assistance from the Small Business Administration.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 WA ranks #2 in 'quiet quitting' study
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/washington-state-ranks-no-2-quiet-quitting-study/VVDGV6H3YVE6JHPHCRQL2LRN2I/
GIST	<p>Today's workforce has introduced a new term that you may or may not have heard about — “quiet quitting.”</p> <p>Quiet quitting describes an employee who does not leave their job but refuses to do anything beyond their basic duties or job description. It has been popularized alongside the term “great resignation.”</p> <p>It seems as though Washingtonians are embracing the concept more than others as it has gained popularity among those who seek to improve their work/life balance.</p> <p>A survey by School Authority found Washington ranked number two in quiet quitting, following Oregon.</p> <p>The website tracked Twitter data in the last 90 days, looking at hashtags and keywords about quiet quitting.</p> <p>Also landing in the top 10 list of states where quiet quitting appears to be most popular, are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Colorado 4. Massachusetts 5. Minnesota 6. New York 7. Illinois 8. Maine 9. Idaho 10. Connecticut
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HEADLINE	09/12 Seattle schools, teachers reach agreement?
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/education/lab/seattle-schools-and-educators-reach-contract-agreement-ending-strike/
GIST	<p>The Seattle Education Association has reached a tentative agreement with Seattle Public Schools, an announcement that appears to signal the end of a four-day strike.</p> <p>The agreement must still be approved by the membership; a vote has been scheduled for Tuesday. A school start date has not yet been announced.</p> <p>The union and district have been in negotiations for months and continued to bargain after SEA's contract expired Aug. 31. SEA's 6,000 members went on strike on Wednesday, which would have been the first day of school, after they were unable to reach a contract agreement with SPS.</p> <p>Monday afternoon, Seattle Schools announced there would be no school Tuesday. District officials would not say how soon classes would start after reaching an agreement with SEA but said they are hopeful it would begin quickly.</p> <p>Students will have to make up the missed days.</p>

	<p>Some of the bigger issues that stalled reaching a contract agreement were smaller teacher-to-student ratios in the special education and multilingual programs, manageable caseloads, more pay, and more student mental health support.</p> <p>District and union leaders have both said they were committed to creating a more inclusionary special education program but disagreed on how make that possible.</p> <p>A copy of the new contract was not immediately available. SEA members need to vote on the contract before it's made public, according to union leadership.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Floatplane wreckage located in Mutiny Bay
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/floatplane-wreckage-located-in-mutiny-bay/
GIST	<p>Wreckage of a floatplane that crashed into Mutiny Bay last week has been located on the seafloor, after the depth and motion of the water hid the wreckage for several days, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.</p> <p>A “large section” similar in length and width to the plane was located Saturday by sonar about 190 feet below the surface of Puget Sound just off Whidbey Island, according to spokesperson Jennifer Gabris.</p> <p>Initially, only small pieces of debris, some personal items and one body, identified as 29-year-old Gabby Hanna, were recovered from the Sept. 4 crash that killed 10 people after witnesses say the plane “disappeared” into the water.</p> <p>Nine people — the pilot and eight other passengers — are still unaccounted for.</p> <p>Investigators worked with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Washington’s Applied Physics Laboratory to comb a 1.75-by-0.75-mile area where the plane was believed to have crashed, according to witness reports.</p> <p>NTSB Investigator Doug Brazy said Friday that NOAA sonar had identified “dozens” of potential pieces of debris that could not be confirmed as plane wreckage. Over the weekend, a UW vessel using multiple types of sonar was able to identify a significant portion of the plane.</p> <p>Given the depth and 3- to 5-knot currents, the NTSB is seeking a work-class remotely operated vehicle to recover the wreckage.</p> <p>NTSB Board Member Tom Chapman said Sept. 6 the investigation into what caused the accident largely hinged on the recovery of wreckage and could take up to 24 months under normal conditions, adding that the crash was “an unusual situation under any circumstances.”</p> <p>The plane was a de Havilland DHC-3 Otter, a regular in the Seattle area’s floatplane ecosystem, bound from Friday Harbor to Renton, before plummeting into the water over Labor Day weekend, causing a large splash and a loud boom, reported by over two dozen boaters and beachgoers. The plane was flying at less than 1,000 feet, according to NTSB, and had spent just 18 minutes in the air, according to FAA tracking data.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Fire crews ‘good day’ in Snohomish Co. fire
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/good-day-for-bolt-creek-fire-crews-but-threat-isnt-over-yet/
GIST	<p>INDEX — After a wildland blaze tore across the mountain foothills last weekend — with hot, easterly winds fueling the wildfire’s crawl and the smoke’s descent toward Western Washington towns — a welcome change in the wind came Monday.</p>

A cool marine breeze from the west and a spike in humidity have knocked out the dry, windy conditions that fed the [Bolt Creek fire](#), giving crews a window to strengthen their containment efforts and stave off the fire's growth.

The fire stretched across an estimated 7,660 acres as of Monday afternoon, reflecting minimal growth from the day before, and was 2% contained. The sky, while still hazy, no longer glowed orange, and a light rain fell Monday morning.

"It's been a good day today for firefighters," said Jim Cahill, a Washington State Department of Natural Resources spokesperson.

But officials were quick to erase ideas that the fire's threats had passed.

The wildfire still threatens hundreds of homes and other structures — though so far, it has only damaged one building. An evacuation order is still in place for Index, a town of roughly 170 people in Snohomish County. That order will remain until crews are "absolutely confident" the fire risk has disappeared, said Peter Mongillo, spokesperson for Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue.

Schools in Sultan, farther west in Snohomish County along Highway 2, closed Monday in response to the wildfire and unhealthy air quality.

And a roughly 17-mile stretch of Highway 2 — from Gold Bar to Skykomish — remains closed to traffic.

Joseph Calabro, spokesperson for the Washington State Department of Transportation, said he doesn't have an estimate for when the highway will reopen.

The continued closure is serving a dual purpose, officials say: It's not yet safe to travel the road, and keeping the highway closed gives fire crews the ability to use the wide stretch of pavement as a fire barrier.

Much of the containment strategy has involved using Highway 2 and a stretch of forest road to shield forest to the west, south and east.

The fire spread downhill to several mile markers on Highway 2, Calabro said, burning tree trunks and weakening their roots — a dangerous combination that will require fire crews to clear timber along the road's edge before officials can safely open the highway.

Mongillo said more than 400 firefighters were working Monday, cutting down trees and igniting controlled burns on the fire's southern edge along Highway 2, "so that when the big fire comes, it runs into no fuel.

"What we ultimately need right now is rain," Mongillo said. "We need lots of rain."

The terrain is steep and treacherous, he added, complicating crews' efforts to quickly clear trees and open the roadway. On Sunday night, he said, rocks fell onto the road after trees caught fire on top of a tunnel near the Money Creek Campground northwest of Skykomish. Geotechnical engineers have been sent out to assess the tunnel's stability, Calabro said.

On the fire's eastern edge, Cahill said, firefighters were at work creating a containment line along forest roads.

Crews were using chain saws to down trees. But Cahill said large, heavy pieces of equipment called masticators, which are similar to wood chippers and can chew through brush and trees, will arrive soon. The machinery will help turn trees along a roughly 6-mile north-south corridor into wood chips that will then be dumped on the side of the highway opposite the fire line.

	<p>“It’s quite an elaborate operation,” Cahill said.</p> <p>Despite crews’ work and the ongoing evacuation order, an intermittent stream of cars — mostly emergency responders and fire department trucks — continued to pass in both directions near Highway 2’s western roadblock.</p> <p>Danger persists as long as the fire is active, and Index’s mandatory evacuation order will likely continue for at least three more days, Southeast Washington Incident Management Team spokesperson Ben Shearer said Monday.</p> <p>Still, some Index residents rushed home to grab items they forgot while evacuating, pick up a pet or simply check on their homes.</p> <p>Josie Radzwill, who has lived in Index since the 1970s, was one of a handful of residents tired of waiting and encouraged by clearer skies. She returned home Monday morning to water her plants and refill a hummingbird feeder.</p> <p>She’s prepared to leave immediately should the fire worsen or smoke blacken the sky. But she planned on spending the night in town.</p> <p>“I missed my home,” she said.</p> <p>Others who fled stayed with loved ones or at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds.</p> <p>Leigh Christianson and Len Gugala spent a second night sleeping at the fairgrounds in Monroe after evacuating from Index on Saturday.</p> <p>Gugala slept in the passenger seat of his truck with a pillow and a blanket, while Christianson slept on a cot inside a shelter for evacuees, making use of the facilities.</p> <p>“Happiness is a hot shower,” she said.</p> <p>Tonda Thibodeau, who also slept in the shelter Sunday night, said a friend texted her to ask whether she’s been stressed or afraid.</p> <p>“Actually,” she said, “it’s boring waiting around to see whether nature will take you out or not.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Air quality at hazardous levels in Chelan Co.
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/news/air-quality-reaches-hazardous-levels-in-chelan-county-wenatchee-valley/
GIST	<p>WENATCHEE — Heavy wildfire smoke reduced air quality throughout much of Chelan County to hazardous levels Monday.</p> <p>At 10 a.m., the worst air quality was measured near Plain where the air quality index reached a “hazardous” 423, according to Washington Smoke Blog, an air monitoring site operated by a group of Washington government agencies. Leavenworth was almost on par with its neighbors to the north with “hazardous” AQI ratings of 422 and 372.</p> <p>A “good” AQI rating ranges from 0-50.</p> <p>Cashmere air quality was “very unhealthy” with an AQI rating of 271. Sunnyslope had an AQI of 415, and Wenatchee had “hazardous” ratings near No. 2 Canyon Road — 381 AQI — and at Central Washington Hospital — 322 AQI — and a “very unhealthy” rating on Fifth Street — 250 AQI.</p> <p>Downtown Chelan was rated at “moderate” with an AQI of 75, but air quality worsened uplake and was rated at “unhealthy for sensitive groups” in Stehekin.</p>

	<p>Few measurements were available in Douglas County, but Orondo was rated at “unhealthy for sensitive groups” with an AQI of 144 and Waterville was considered “moderate” with an AQI of 82.</p> <p>The dubious title of worst air quality Monday in the Pacific Northwest appeared to belong to La Pine, Oregon, where AQI was measured at 609. La Pine is about 22 miles east of the 87,000-acre Cedar Creek Fire burning in the Willamette National Forest.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Northwest cherry harvest smallest in 14yrs
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/northwest-cherry-harvest-smallest-in-14-years-due-to-cold
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The Pacific Northwest cherry crop this year is the smallest in 14 years at least in part because of a spring snowstorm.</p> <p>The smaller-than-usual fruit harvest happened largely because Oregon and Washington were hit with a severe winter storm on April 14, during the region's cherry blossom bloom, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.</p> <p>According to B.J. Thurlby, the president of both the Washington State Fruit Commission and Northwest Cherries, a snow event during the cherry bloom has not happened before.</p> <p>He said this year's crop is the smallest since 2008.</p> <p>"The crop should finish up at 130,000 tons going to the fresh market," Thurlby told OPB. "A normal crop is 210,000 tons going to the fresh market. While the state fruit commission cannot comment on market prices, fewer cherries will be available on the market, with the Northwest being one of the largest exporters in the nation."</p> <p>Charles Poindexter, co-owner of Sherwood Orchards, said farms in the Willamette Valley weren't as severely affected as colder parts of the Pacific Northwest.</p> <p>Poindexter said his apple season was also affected by the weather. He said it started about a week late because of cold weather, but he hopes the crop won't be seriously impacted.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 After rout Ukraine weighs critical gambles
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/world/europe/ukraine-russia-offensive-whats-next.html
GIST	<p>DNIPROPETROVSK REGION, Ukraine — After Ukraine's stunning offensive in its northeast drove Russian forces into a chaotic retreat and reshaped the battlefield by hundreds of miles, Ukrainian leaders on Monday were weighing critical gambles that could determine the near-term course of the war.</p> <p>Stretching the Ukrainian forces — a military still much smaller and far less equipped than its Russian foe — too far could leave the troops vulnerable to attack. Moving too slow, or in the wrong place, could leave an opportunity squandered. And waiting too long could allow the front lines to freeze as winter sets in.</p> <p>By expelling Russian troops from a large slice of strategic territory in the northeastern Kharkiv region, Ukrainian forces are now positioned to make a move on the Donbas, the industrialized eastern territory that Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, has made central to his war aims. Just before flooding troops across the border in February, Mr. Putin declared the Donbas independent from Ukraine, and he held up the region's sovereignty as a key justification for the invasion.</p> <p>Russia now has control of nearly 90 percent of the Donbas, where its military shifted much of its focus after a staggering defeat around the capital, Kyiv, in the spring. If Ukraine were to retake even a part of the region, it would be an embarrassing blow to the Kremlin.</p>

On Monday, the Ukrainian military claimed to have advanced over the past day into an additional 20 Ukrainian towns and villages in the Kharkiv region that had been under Russian control, adding to the hundreds of square miles it has retaken in the northeast. It also said it had recaptured nearly 200 square miles in the southern Kherson region in recent days, as its forces try to cut off thousands of Russian forces stationed west of the Dnipro River.

The military's assertions could not be independently verified, but Western analysts, including at the Pentagon, said that the Ukrainians were overall making gains as quickly as Russian forces were falling back.

But Ukraine faces potentially serious pitfalls if it pushes any farther.

Any future advances would mean that Ukrainian forces would further extend their supply lines, straining convoys of fuel, ammunition and reinforcements as they have to move farther away from their established logistics hubs.

That could leave Ukrainian units vulnerable, said John Blaxland, a professor of security and intelligence studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. Although he added that a Russian counterattack was "not necessarily going to happen," in part because the morale of Moscow's troops [appears to be foundering](#).

Russian officials face their own hard questions, especially with a growing [backlash to their "special military operation" from pro-war voices](#) at home. Russia's military leaders, analysts say, will have to take a clear-eyed look at the reality of their forces' current conditions — depleted and demoralized in some areas — to determine how much of Moscow's goals they can accomplish in the coming months, if any.

They will also have to contend with the rigid structure of Russia's military and, ultimately, the decisions of Mr. Putin, who has [resisted mobilizing](#) a national draft and [sought to preserve a sense of normalcy](#) inside Russia.

The current Ukrainian offensive "was a rapid breakthrough designed to take advantage of favorable positions and thinly manned Russian defenses," said Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at C.N.A., a research institute in Arlington, Va.

With momentum currently on Ukraine's side, the [recent string of victories around the country's second-largest city](#), Kharkiv, means Ukrainian troops are positioned to make gains further east — before Russian forces can retrench on new front lines.

"Ukraine now has options to exploit momentum" in the Donbas, Mr. Kofman said. Russian forces, he added, "will be on the defensive for the foreseeable future."

Ukraine's ability to recapture roughly 1,000 square miles around Kharkiv in a matter of days was largely predicated on [a Russian retreat](#), as Moscow's forces withdrew to avoid encirclement and isolation, especially near [the strategically important city of Izium](#).

The Russian pullout from the Kharkiv region and Izium, a railway hub, has left the Ukrainians with the "ability to shift quickly" elsewhere in the country, Mr. Kofman said. He also noted Ukraine's troops have an advantage in manpower and the ability to conduct "operations along more than one axis," referring to [a separate offensive taking place in Ukraine's south](#), near the port city of Kherson.

Ukraine's ability to muster troops to attack in two directions was a significant feat, analysts said. Both Ukraine and Russia have suffered tens of thousands of casualties, according to Western intelligence estimates, and both countries rely on [a medley of different units](#) to bolster their numbers on the front.

Along Ukraine's newly established front in the Kharkiv region, Ukrainian troops not only have to prepare for future advances but also fortify their own gains.

Securing territory is a resource-intensive challenge in its own right. In recaptured towns and villages, Ukrainian units have to sweep for explosives, including inside abandoned Russian equipment, and look for potential saboteurs. Once those tasks are complete, emergency services such as the police and bomb disposal crews can arrive.

Russian troops appear to have left a large amount of equipment behind, as they did during their hasty retreat from Kyiv. One soldier familiar with the battle said that one unit that took part in the offensive around Kharkiv is already known to have captured so much Russian equipment, including tanks and ammunition, that other units are looking to use it to fill their own supplies.

The captured Russian hardware [is hugely useful to Ukraine](#). Every functional Russian vehicle seized in the recent offensive will likely find its way to the front in the matter of weeks, if not days, replacing Ukraine's worn-down Soviet-era matériel.

“Russian forces abandoned a good deal of equipment,” Mr. Kofman said, adding that “problems with manpower and force availability” have only compounded Russian woes.

But Ukraine's window of opportunity to take advantage of Russia's degraded morale and pell-mell retreat is quickly closing.

Every day that passes, Russian forces have time to dig in and gather reinforcements, drawing new defensive lines and preparing to return to [the monthslong status quo](#) of a grinding artillery battle. Pro-Russian social media accounts have shown images of Russian and pro-Kremlin Chechen forces mustering for deployment in Ukraine or headed to the front.

Russia retains an advantage in weapons and supplies, and Mr. Putin has over the course of the war shown no sign of relenting his military's assault. Last week he [insisted](#) Russia had “not lost anything, and will not lose anything,” dismissing his country's casualties to that point.

Around Lyman, a small city in the Donbas, entrenched Russian forces appeared to have fought back recent Ukrainian attacks. Further southeast, near the village of Pisky, Ukrainian attacks seemed to have also gained little traction, according to pro-Russian social media accounts. The Ukrainian-held city of Bakhmut, also in the Donbas, is under intense shelling, including in the city center.

Terrain like rivers and forests is further hampering Ukrainian advances. Near Izium, Russian forces have retreated across the Oskil River, which runs north to south and connects to the Siverskyi Donets River, which flows to the southeast into the Donbas.

Both rivers have been used by Russian forces as natural defensive lines, ensuring that Ukrainian forces could be easily targeted as they attempt to cross over a limited number of bridges.

The two rivers, by exposing troops trying to cross, have been used to lethal effect by both Ukraine and Russia — as the Oskil was used in 1942, when Soviet snipers and artillery on the eastern side slowed Nazi Germany's push toward Moscow.

With Russia's Kharkiv defenses demolished and their troops redeploying elsewhere, the last remaining Russian front lines — those in the Donbas and Ukraine's south — are likely where the remainder of intense ground fighting will play out, analysts said.

But on Sunday night, Moscow demonstrated its willingness to punish Ukraine for its military successes by appearing to launch cruise missiles at power plants and their substations in the country's east.

The reminder was not subtle: Despite losing the battle, the war was far from over.

HEADLINE	09/13 Ukraine resupply: Russian equipment
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/13/world/ukraine-russia-war
GIST	<p>Ukraine's stunning offensive in the northeast not only has netted territory that had been taken by Russia early in the war, but also a large amount of equipment that had been left behind.</p> <p>A soldier familiar with the battle in the newly established front in the Kharkiv region said that one unit that took part in the offensive is already known to have captured so much Russian equipment, including tanks and ammunition, that other units are looking to use it to fill their own supplies.</p> <p>The captured Russian hardware is hugely useful to Ukraine. Every functional Russian vehicle seized in the recent offensive will likely find its way to the front in the matter of weeks, if not days, replacing Ukraine's worn-down Soviet-era matériel.</p> <p>"Russian forces abandoned a good deal of equipment," said Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at C.N.A., a research institute in Arlington, Va., adding that "problems with manpower and force availability" have only compounded Russian woes.</p> <p>At a briefing with reporters at the Pentagon on Monday, a senior U.S. military officer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about Ukraine's military operations, said that some of the Russian soldiers had returned home instead of regrouping elsewhere in Ukraine.</p> <p>"Overall, we assess the Ukrainians are making progress as they fight to liberate and reclaim territory in the south and east," the officer said. "On the ground, in the vicinity of Kharkiv, we assess that Russian forces have largely ceded their gains to the Ukrainians and have withdrawn to the north and east. Many of these forces have moved over the border into Russia."</p> <p>Still, Russia retains an advantage in weapons and supplies, and President Vladimir V. Putin has over the course of the war shown no sign of relenting his military's assault. Last week he insisted that Russia had "not lost anything, and will not lose anything," dismissing his country's casualties to that point.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Worry: strike threat on freight railroads
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/business/economy/freight-railroad-strike.html
GIST	<p>Biden administration officials are racing to prevent a strike by tens of thousands of freight railroad workers that could further disrupt an already strained supply chain and cause billions of dollars in economic damage.</p> <p>The industry failed to reach a contract agreement with two unions representing much of the work force, and a federally mandated 30-day "cooling off" period ends on Friday, opening a door to strikes and lockouts. Some freight companies have started to limit services, and Amtrak, which carries many travelers on lines operated by freight railroads, said it would cancel some passenger service starting on Tuesday.</p> <p>Labor Secretary Martin J. Walsh pressured both sides over the weekend to reach an agreement, and administration officials have held dozens of calls with the industry and the unions, according to the Labor Department.</p> <p>"All parties need to stay at the table, bargain in good faith to resolve outstanding issues and come to an agreement," the department said in a statement. "The fact that we are already seeing some impacts of contingency planning by railways again demonstrates that a shutdown of our freight rail system is an unacceptable outcome for our economy and the American people, and all parties must work to avoid that."</p> <p>The deadlock puts President Biden in a complicated position. His administration has taken pains to restore and fortify the supply chain, which was deeply disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. It has also worked hard to protect and endorse union rights.</p>

“A strike doesn’t help anybody,” Mr. Walsh said in an interview late last month. “A strike doesn’t help the workers. A strike doesn’t help the general public. A strike certainly doesn’t help the supply chain.”

In July, Mr. Biden established an emergency board to help mediate the dispute between the industry, which includes six of the largest freight rail carriers, and about a dozen unions. Last month, that board recommended a resolution with a cumulative raise of 24 percent from 2020 through 2024, including an immediate 14 percent wage increase covering the first three years.

Most of the unions agreed to the proposal, pending a vote of their membership. But two major unions are holding out for improvements to working conditions, which they say have steadily worsened in recent years as rail carriers [have cut staffing](#).

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the SMART Transportation Division, which represent engineers and conductors, say workers must often stay on call for several days at a time, working 12-hour shifts with little notice, and are penalized for calling in sick.

“Our unions remain at the bargaining table and have given the rail carriers a proposal that we would be willing to submit to our members for ratification, but it is the rail carriers that refuse to reach an acceptable agreement,” [they said in a joint statement](#). “In fact, it was abundantly clear from our negotiations over the past few days that the railroads show no intentions of reaching an agreement with our unions.”

Together, the two unions represent nearly half the 115,000 freight rail workers covered by the negotiations. While the unions have not committed to striking on Friday, a walkout remains an option, a spokesman said, noting that more than 99 percent of participating members of the locomotive engineers union voted in July to authorize a strike.

In an interview on Monday, Dennis Pierce, president of that union, said the unions had just advanced a proposal that included an allowance that workers can take unpaid time off for a doctor’s appointment without being disciplined.

“It’s no longer about money — it’s about unpaid time off to go to the doctor without getting fired,” Mr. Pierce said. He added that if the railroad carriers agreed to the proposal, the unions would put it to a vote, which would avert a labor stoppage for at least a few weeks as the count unfolded.

The industry fared well last year, with some large freight carriers reporting record income from operations.

A disruption could be far-reaching, affecting a wide range of goods. Trade groups representing the agricultural industry and manufacturers of consumer products said disruptions would hurt their members and have called on Congress to intervene if necessary.

“Failure to finalize an agreement before the Sept. 16 deadline will hurt U.S. consumers and imperil the availability, affordability and accessibility of everyday essential products,” the Consumer Brands Association, which represents manufacturers of food, beverage, household and personal care products, said in a letter to Mr. Biden last week.

In a [statement over the weekend](#), Corey Rosenbusch, the president of the Fertilizer Institute, an industry group, said a potential work stoppage would be “bad news for farmers and food security.”

The Association of American Railroads, a freight rail industry group, said a disruption to service would [cost more than \\$2 billion per day](#) in economic output, idle thousands of trains and result in widespread product shortages and job losses. Rail accounts for about 28 percent of U.S. freight movement, second only to trucking’s nearly 40 percent, [according to federal data](#).

More than 460,000 additional trucks would be needed each day to carry the goods otherwise delivered by rail, the American Trucking Associations, another industry group, said in [a letter last week asking](#)

[lawmakers to be prepared to intervene](#). The trucking industry faces a shortage of 80,000 drivers, so a rail disruption would “create havoc in the supply chain and fuel inflationary pressures across the board,” it said.

In a message on Friday, Steve Bobb, the chief marketing officer of one of the rail carriers, BNSF, [encouraged customers to ask Congress to intervene](#). His counterpart at Norfolk Southern echoed that request to its customers over the weekend, too.

Senator Roger Wicker of Mississippi, the top Republican on the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, [said on Friday](#) that he was hopeful that a strike could be averted, but was prepared to act if not.

“The Presidential Emergency Board has put forward a comprehensive and fair set of recommendations that, if adopted, could end this standoff today,” Mr. Wicker said. “I will be calling on my colleagues in Congress to join the administration in endorsing these recommendations as written and advance legislation to resolve this dispute if it is clear that a shutdown in rail service is imminent.”

A work stoppage would affect passenger rail, too. Amtrak, the national passenger railroad, owns only 3 percent of the tracks that its trains use, with the remaining 97 percent mostly owned and maintained by freight carriers.

Because Amtrak operates most of the tracks along the bustling Northeast Corridor, which runs from Boston to Washington, travel along that stretch would be generally unaffected, it said in a statement. But the railroad said it would cancel three long-distance routes starting on Tuesday, in preparation for a freight rail disruption, which it said could “significantly impact intercity passenger rail service.”

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HEADLINE	09/13 Ukraine exposes rot in Russia military
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/13/europe/ukraine-advance-russia-war-analysis-intl-hnk-ml/index.html
GIST	<p>For Russia, the numbers are catastrophic.</p> <p>From Wednesday to Sunday, Vladimir Putin’s military forces saw at least 338 pieces of important military hardware – from fighter jets to tanks to trucks – destroyed, damaged or captured, according to numbers from the open source intelligence website Oryx, as Ukraine’s forces have bolted through Russian-held territory in an offensive that has stunned the Russians in its speed and breadth.</p> <p>Ukraine’s top military commander claimed on Sunday that more than 3,000 square kilometers (1,158 square miles) of territory had been retaken by his country’s forces since the beginning of September. And for more perspective, just “since Wednesday, Ukraine has recaptured territory at least twice the size of Greater London,” the British Defense Ministry said Monday.</p> <p>Ukrainian reports say Putin’s troops are fleeing east to the Russian border in whatever transport they can find, even taking cars from the civilian population in the areas they had captured since the start of the war in February.</p> <p>In their wake they leave hundreds of pieces of the Russian war machine, which since Putin’s so-called “special military operation” commenced, has not come close to living up to its pre-war billing as one of the world’s great powers.</p> <p>These Russian losses are the accumulation of a multitude of existing problems that are now colliding head-on with a Ukrainian military that has been patient, methodical and infused with billions of dollars of the Western military equipment that Russia cannot match.</p> <p>And without a drastic, and potentially unconventional intervention from Putin, the Ukrainian victories are likely to accelerate, analysts say.</p>

Many of Russia's problems – poor and inflexible leadership, sour troop morale, inadequate logistics and hardware beset by maintenance issues – have been evident since the beginning stages of the war more than seven months ago.

The Russian military's hollow core – including [tanks that were easy prey for Ukrainian ground troops](#) and [trucks that didn't have the right tires](#) to traverse Ukraine's landscape – was quickly exposed by tactics ill-suited to the blitzkrieg Putin had planned.

Remember that [64-kilometer \(40-mile\) convoy](#) that stalled on the way to the capital of Kyiv and was shredded by Ukrainian defenders?

As that convoy stalled, reports filtered out that Russian troops had significant morale problems – some didn't even know they were in Ukraine, or if they did, why they were there. As the fighting intensified, Ukrainian forces targeted Russian leadership, [killing generals](#) and colonels who would have been expected to rally the Russian forces.

And the Russians certainly needed stronger leadership if accounts of troop hardships are to be believed. Pavel Filatyev, a Russian paratrooper who fought his army's capture of the Ukrainian city of Kherson earlier in the war, [told CNN last month](#) that his unit lacked even the basics during that operation.

“Several days after we encircled Kherson many of us did not have any food, water or sleeping sacks,” he said. “Because it was very cold at night, we couldn't even sleep. We would find some rubbish, some rags, just to wrap ourselves to keep warm.”

And their armaments were substandard, he said.

“All of our weapons are from the times of Afghanistan,” where Russian forces fought from 1979 to 1989, he said.

The impact of Western arms donations

Meanwhile, Western arms have flowed into Ukraine, among them powerful advanced artillery systems like [the HIMARS, or High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems](#).

The wheeled HIMARS offer what US manufacturer Lockheed Martin calls “shoot and scoot capability” – they can fire highly accurate rockets at targets about 70 to 80 kilometers (about 50 miles) away and then move quickly to avoid any counterstrike.

Ukraine has used them with devastating effect on Russian supply lines, ammunition dumps and command posts.

“Ukraine's armed forces employed HIMARS and other Western systems to attack Russian ground lines of communication in Kharkiv and Kherson Oblasts, setting conditions for the success of this operation,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in a blog post on Sunday.

The pounding meted out by Ukrainian deployed HIMARS on Russian supply lines has been relentless, according to Western analysts.

“Ukrainian long-range artillery is now probably hitting crossings of the Dnipro (River) so frequently that Russia cannot carry out repairs to damaged road bridges,” Britain's Defense Ministry said Monday.

Trent Telenko, a former quality control auditor for the US' Defense Contract Management Agency who has studied Russian logistics, said Ukrainian forces used precision rockets fired from the HIMARS batteries to take out key large Russian arms depots near rail lines well back of the front lines.

This meant Russia had to use trucks to disperse artillery pieces and ammunition to smaller depots, making it more difficult to distribute, Telenko said. When Ukraine began its lightning offensive, Russia could not bring appropriate firepower to blunt the Ukrainian advance because its artillery was so dispersed, he said.

But the HIMARS and other powerful Western artillery systems shouldn't get all the credit, ISW said. They were coupled with Ukrainian feints and ingenuity.

Last week Russia redeployed forces to the south to bolster its ranks ahead of a mooted Ukrainian counteroffensive in Kherson region, according to Ukrainian officials and footage of equipment moving through Crimea.

That opened the door for Ukrainian forces farther north.

"Kyiv's long discussion and then an announcement of a counter-offensive operation aimed at Kherson Oblast drew substantial Russian troops away from the sectors on which Ukrainian forces have conducted decisive attacks in the past several days," ISW said.

Once those Russian forces moved, the Ukrainian military probed for weak points in Russian lines, said Mark Hertling, a CNN analyst and former US Army general.

"What they have been able to do is conduct reconnaissance with a small force to find where to conduct a much larger breakthrough, pushing tanks and artillery through the holes in the Russian front and then getting into the Russian rear areas," Hertling said.

Supplies for Ukraine to fuel its advance

The quick Russian retreat has enabled Ukraine to capture Russian arms, ammunition, fuel and supplies in those rear areas, said Telenko, adding that the addition of trucks and trains to the Ukrainian inventory will allow Kyiv to "supercharge" its advances.

Analysts have also noted the lack of Russian air support.

Richard Hooker Jr., a nonresident senior fellow with the Atlantic Council, said last month that Ukraine has stitched together a force of older anti-aircraft systems already in its inventory with supplies of US and German equipment and "largely sidelined Russian airpower."

"Ukraine has been outstandingly successful in denying Russia air supremacy with extremely effective air defense and a strategy of 'air denial,'" Hooper [wrote on the Atlantic Council's "Ukraine Alert" blog](#).

And Russian setbacks are just fuel for even more trouble ahead, a spiral of defeats that may be beyond Moscow's ability to stop.

Mick Ryan, an adjunct fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former Australian Army general, terms it "cascading failure" in a Twitter post. "Each battlefield loss and withdrawal leads to further failure," he said.

As the options dwindle, so will embattled Russian morale.

As retreating forces move back, they'll bring stories of their withdrawal with them. It will be all but impossible for the Kremlin to keep those stories from spreading within its forces and even to their relatives back home.

The territory Russia captured in Ukraine over seven months, at the cost of tens of thousands of Russian casualties, has been lost in a week.

And Russia's generals seemingly have no immediate answer.

Even when Putin's forces were advancing, those advances were slow and grinding. And earlier in the war, Ukraine's defenders never fled the way Russian troops have in the past week.

"The already limited trust deployed troops have in Russia's senior military leadership is likely to deteriorate further," the British Defense Ministry said on Monday.

The ministry's report said the Ukrainian attacks had made it difficult for Russia to move replacement troops to the front lines.

Where does Moscow find replacements?

The big question is whether Russia has fresh trained troops to move forward.

In July, CNN reported that the [call had gone out across Russia for more than 30,000 volunteers](#) to join the war effort in Ukraine. The lure was big cash bonuses and no experience was necessary.

But Kateryna Stepanenko, a Russia researcher at ISW, said those new recruits would likely be of little help on the battlefield as there would not be enough time to train them.

For instance, training a tank crew can take several months at a minimum and sometimes more than a year, experts say.

"Short-term training is unlikely to turn volunteers with no prior experience into effective soldiers in any unit," Stepanenko said.

And those 300-plus Russian pieces of hardware left destroyed, damaged or abandoned on the battlefield over the past several days won't be easy to replace either.

Russian industry has been hamstrung by Western sanctions. Russian arms depots have already been raided to replace earlier losses. And while large numbers of arms may remain in those depots, they are likely old and in need of repair or refurbishment, said Jakub Janovsky, a military analyst who contributes to the Oryx blog.

"In practice replacements are often much older vehicles – likely to suffer from reliability problems and with lower effectiveness in combat," he said.

Moscow retains manufacturing capacity, but lacks the best components for what it might make, Janovsky said.

"Due to sanctions they might have to replace sensors and electronics with inferior alternatives – and the amount they can produce in the near term is a fraction of what they are losing. Those material losses ... are not sustainable," he said.

So advantage Ukraine, at least in the near term.

But Ryan, the former Australian general, remains cautious.

"It is too early to speak in overly triumphant terms. The Russians still have the capacity to respond. The south & east are still occupied by the Russians. The Ukrainians have won a significant victory, but there is still a war to be won," he tweeted.

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HEADLINE	09/12 CDC issues alert on enterovirus D68
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/cdc-warns-enterovirus-d68-muscle-weakness-kids-rcna47362
GIST	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is warning about the spread of a common childhood virus that can cause muscle weakness or paralysis in rare cases.

The CDC [issued an alert](#) Friday about enterovirus D68, which most commonly leads to respiratory illness among kids, with symptoms that are often mild but can become severe. The enterovirus family is large, and polio falls within it; both EV-D68 and poliovirus can invade the nervous system and cause muscle weakness.

Occasionally, EV-D68 can result in a condition called acute flaccid myelitis, or AFM, which is characterized by inflammation in the neck region of the spinal cord. Some people who experience AFM have difficulty moving their arms, while others experience weakness in all four extremities. During a large outbreak in the U.S. in 2014, around [10% of people with EV-D68](#) went on to develop AFM.

Full recovery from AFM is rare, and although most patients improve to some extent, the process is often difficult, and it requires rehabilitation.

The CDC this year has identified more EV-D68 cases among children with severe respiratory illness than in the past three years combined. There were 84 such cases from March through Aug. 4. By comparison, the CDC identified six such cases in 2019, 30 in 2020 and 16 in 2021.

Those figures are likely to be undercounts, however, because not everyone with respiratory symptoms gets tested for EV-D68.

As of Sept. 2, 13 cases of AFM have been confirmed this year in the U.S. The CDC said it is investigating 20 additional cases.

In the past, the CDC has recorded spikes in EV-D68 cases every other year. Before the coronavirus pandemic, that was in 2014, 2016 and 2018. Dr. Benjamin Greenberg, a neurologist at UT Southwestern's O'Donnell Brain Institute who treats patients at Children's Health in Dallas, said the pattern most likely appears because kids develop immunity to the enterovirus when it spreads, leading to "off" years with higher population immunity. Once the immunity wanes, case numbers tick up again.

Dr. Sarah Hopkins, a pediatric neurologist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, said: "We really thought this was going to happen in 2020, because we had the last spike in 2018. But then with mask-wearing and social distancing and all those things that limit the spread of a respiratory virus, we didn't have that expected spike."

Greenberg said cases are most likely rising again this year because children are back in school and other public spaces.

"We have a group of kids now who've never seen the virus, because they weren't having school exposures. So we think the at-risk population is bigger than in 2020," he said.

All seven pediatric medical centers affiliated with the CDC's New Vaccine Surveillance Network — in Nashville, Tennessee; Houston; Kansas City, Missouri; Cincinnati; Seattle; Pittsburgh; and Rochester, New York — have detected cases of EV-D68 this year. The CDC said it had also received reports of increases in severe respiratory illness among children in Minnesota, Arizona and Utah, raising concerns that some of those infections might be EV-D68, as well.

The agency is telling health care providers to be on the lookout for EV-D68 cases among kids and to strongly consider AFM as a potential diagnosis for patients with limb weakness.

But it can be hard to distinguish EV-D68 symptoms from those of respiratory viruses, Greenberg said. Like the common cold, EV-D68 can cause a runny nose, sneezing, body aches or muscle aches.

Children who require hospitalization tend to have coughs, shortness of breath, wheezing and — in about half of cases — fever.

AFM could also be confused with a severe case of polio, which results in a similar condition called acute flaccid paralysis. The U.S. recorded one polio case in July, and it has [detected the virus in wastewater across several New York counties](#).

Greenberg said the polio detection calls for "raised awareness among health care providers so that they can send appropriate testing."

"It's really important to know which virus is causing the paralysis in patients," he added.

What is enterovirus D68?

Scientists first identified enterovirus D68 in 1962. At the time, the virus wasn't circulating much, and it resulted in milder illness than it does today, Greenberg said.

The CDC started doing [more testing for EV-D68](#) in 2014, when scientists noticed a shift in how the virus behaved.

"The virus changed over time in order to acquire the ability to kill neurons to damage the spinal cord," Greenberg said.

This year's case total is lower than 2018's. From July to November of that year, the U.S. had 382 cases of EV-D68 among children with acute respiratory illness.

"It doesn't look like things have suddenly taken a terrible turn for the worse," said Dr. Keith Van Haren, an assistant neurology professor at Stanford University, adding, "I'm hopeful that at least there's not a tidal wave of new neurologic cases as of yet."

Most EV-D68 cases happen around this time of year, from August to November, he said.

If past years are any indication, Greenberg said, "in the next few weeks we will see an obvious uptick in the number of AFM cases unless the virus has changed for the better."

Van Haren said it takes one to four weeks for an EV-D68 case to progress to AFM, although the condition can take various forms.

"The outcomes are everything from just a little bit of slight shoulder weakness to difficulty moving all extremities and sometimes even needing prolonged respiratory support," Hopkins said.

Van Haren said patients usually start to recover from their respiratory symptoms before neurologic symptoms set in.

"When the neurologic symptoms begin, they can begin pretty suddenly. They can peak within the course of hours in a way that can be a little bit startling," he said.

Children who develop AFM usually require hospitalization. For reasons scientists haven't quite figured out, kids at greatest risk include those with histories of asthma.

There are no specific treatments for AFM. Doctors may provide antibody therapy to improve a patient's immune response or administer supportive care, like ventilators or fluids.

The best way to protect yourself or your kids from EV-D68, experts said, is to be diligent about hand-washing and to wear a mask in public.

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SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/vladimir-putin-bailed-on-top-military-meetings-in-sochi-after-crushing-losses-in-ukraine-war?ref=home
GIST	<p>After Russian forces in Ukraine suffered a series of crushing defeats over the weekend, Russian President Vladimir Putin went into retreat himself.</p> <p>The Russian president postponed a planned meeting with his top military brass and representatives of the defense industry in Sochi, in a sign that Putin is caught in the lurch after Ukrainian forces reclaimed a lot of territory that Russian armed forces had seized earlier in the war, according to TASS. It is thought to be the largest Russian defeat since the beginning of the war.</p> <p>“The Sochi meetings are in demand, they will continue,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, indicating that the meeting was just being postponed, not canceled.</p> <p>Peskov said Putin had pushed off the meeting with Russian defense leadership and defense industry representatives, which is usually held in May, due to a “very, very busy” schedule.</p> <p>But he also suggested that Putin needed time to digest the new developments in the war, alluding to the losses.</p> <p>“Especially since as the special military operation develops, certain experience is gained that needs to be discussed,” Peksov added.</p> <p>This is now at least the second shakeup Russian defense leadership have had to endure in trying to set up this meeting with Putin this year. In the thick of the invasion this May, Peskov suggested there were no plans to hold the usual meeting.</p> <p>Other signs that the Ukrainian counteroffensive has left the Kremlin shaken have emerged in recent hours. Putin had planned to host a series of referenda as a way to fabricate support for Russia’s takeover. But Putin has now allegedly canceled them, according to Meduza, which cites two sources close to the Kremlin.</p> <p>A pro-Moscow official in Kherson, Kirill Stremousov, has also suggested the referenda are on “pause” given the Ukrainian counteroffensive, although he has sought to walk back his comments, according to France 24.</p> <p>The news comes days after Ukrainian forces began launching a counteroffensive in southern territories captured by Russia. Ukrainian forces also launched operations aimed at the northeast of the country, which Russian troops likely weren’t prepared for. Russia had rerouted forces to the south to handle the expected counteroffensive there, according to the Institute for the Study of War.</p> <p>That regrouping may have been a strategic blunder. In the end, Russian forces were outnumbered by eight to one in the Kharkiv region, according to Vitaly Ganchev, a top military official appointed to the region.</p> <p>Ukrainian forces have so far reclaimed over 3,000 square kilometers of territory since the beginning of the month, according to Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s Armed Forces—a statistic that would indicate the Ukrainians have tripled their won territory in just a couple of days. Ukrainians have reclaimed more than 20 settlements in the Kharkiv and Donetsk regions, according to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, sending Russian forces retreating. Ukrainians have also taken Vysokopillia, Novovoznesenske, Bilohirka, Myroliubivka, and Sukhyi Stavok, Natalia Humeniuk, the head of the United Coordinating Press Center of Defense Forces of the South of Ukraine, said Monday.</p> <p>The wins that Ukrainian armed forces secured in the last several days could place Russian narratives about the war—which, in Russia, remain focused on an alleged attempt to “liberate” the Donbas—in jeopardy.</p>

According to a British intelligence assessment, the losses will likely inject tension into [Russia's military leadership](#) and exacerbate existing suspicions in Russia's military ranks, which have been gutted in recent weeks.

"The rapid Ukrainian successes have significant implications for Russia's overall operational design," the [British intelligence assessment](#) states. "The majority of the force in Ukraine is highly likely being forced to prioritize emergency defensive actions."

"The already limited trust deployed troops have in Russia's senior military leadership is likely to deteriorate further," the assessment read.

Already, Russian officials are second-guessing the entire "special" military operation in Ukraine. Municipal deputies from Moscow and St. Petersburg [demanded that Putin resign](#), noting that "everything went wrong." Some lawmakers have accused Putin of high treason for invading Ukraine.

Even Ramzan Kadyrov, Putin's key ally in Chechnya, has started lobbing criticism at Russia's military.

"Mistakes were made," Kadyrov said on Telegram. "And if today or tomorrow changes are not made to the strategy of the 'special military operation,' I will be forced to turn to the leadership of the Ministry of Defense, the leadership of the country to explain to them the situation that is really happening on the ground."

So far, though, the Kremlin has attempted to project a sense of calm about the losses in Ukraine. Russia's Defense Ministry hasn't explicitly admitted a defeat, but rather has indicated Russia has made a decision to "regroup."

"In order to achieve the declared goals of the special military operation for the liberation of Donbas, it was decided to regroup the Russian forces stationed near Balakleya and Izyum to boost efforts in the Donetsk direction," Russian Defense Ministry Spokesman Igor Konashenkov [told reporters](#).

Peskov, for his part, said that Russia will continue to work to achieve its military goals.

"The special military operation is underway and will continue until the goals that have been set are achieved," [Peskov told reporters](#).

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HEADLINE	09/12 Vice president declares: border is secure
SOURCE	https://www.foxnews.com/politics/kamala-harris-declares-border-secure-thousands-illegals-flood-us-every-day
GIST	<p>Vice President Kamala Harris twice declared the U.S. southern border is "secure" during an interview Sunday, despite the tens of thousands of illegal immigrants who routinely cross into the country every month.</p> <p>During an interview on "Meet the Press" aired during the 21st anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Harris was asked by NBC News anchor Chuck Todd whether the border is secure. The vice president responded that the immigration system was "broken" under the Trump administration and still "needs to be fixed."</p> <p>"I think that there is no question that we have to do what the president and I asked Congress to do, the first request we made: pass a bill to create a pathway to citizenship," Harris said. "The border is secure, but we also have a broken immigration system, in particular, over the last four years before we came in, and it needs to be fixed."</p> <p>Todd pushed back against Harris' claim about the border being secure.</p>

"We're going to have two million people cross this border for the first time ever. You're confident this border's secure?" Todd asked.

"We have a secure border in that that is a priority for any nation, including ours and our administration," [Harris replied](#). "But there are still a lot of problems that we are trying to fix given the deterioration that happened over the last four years. We also have to put into place a law and a plan for a pathway for citizenship for the millions of people who are here and are prepared to do what is legally required to gain citizenship."

"We don't have that in place because people are playing politics in a state like this and in Congress," she added, referring to Texas. "By the way, you want to talk about bipartisanship on an issue that at one time was a bipartisan issue both in terms of Republican senators and even presidents."

Harris, who was visiting the Lone Star state last week for a number of events, was put in charge of tackling the border crisis by President Biden shortly after they assumed office in 2021.

Meanwhile, the number of migrant encounters at the southern border has smashed through the [two-million mark](#) this fiscal year, breaching the already-historic 1.7 million encounters last year, as Border Patrol agents deal with a migrant crisis unprecedented in U.S. history and one that the Biden administration has so far failed to slow.

Officials [estimated to Fox News Digital](#) in July that more than 500,000 illegals were known to have slipped past agents in FY22 so far but have been detected by cameras or other sensors. There have been about 55,000 so-called "gotaways" each month this fiscal year, and that number doesn't include the individuals who have not been detected by technology.

The number is also in addition to the 389,155 known gotaways that DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas previously testified there were in all of FY21.

Still, the White House is trying to paint the border crisis as under control. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre [came under fire](#) last month after she claimed people were not walking into the country illegally.

"That's not how it works," she said.

Those who have entered illegally have typically been deported if encountered by ICE. However, the Biden administration imposed limits on the agency, restricting them to focus on recent border crossers and national security and public safety threats.

That guidance has since been blocked by a court injunction, but arrests and deportations plummeted under the Biden administration. In FY21, [ICE arrested](#) 74,082 noncitizens and deported 59,011 — down from 103,603 arrests and 185,884 removals in FY20 and 143,099 arrests and 267,258 deportations in FY19.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Ukraine: Russia units negotiate surrender
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/putin-troops-surrender-fever-sweeps-through-ranks-in-ukraine-after-russian-forces-collapse?ref=home
GIST	<p>Picture this: You're a Russian soldier, stuck in Kherson, waiting for a Ukrainian assault. Your supply route across the Dnipro River has been cut off by rocket attacks. Your ammunition dumps keep getting blown up. And you've watched thousands of your colleagues flee the battleground after a stunning Ukrainian offensive in the northeast of the country.</p> <p>You could stay and fight—but why risk your life for a war that's not even officially a war? Or you could take President Volodymyr Zelensky at his word when he promises that all Russian soldiers who surrender will be treated with respect, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.</p>

A Ukrainian Armed Forces spokeswoman, Natalia Humeniuk, reported Monday that a number of “separate” Russian units around the southern city of Kherson had begun suing for peace and were “trying to negotiate with the Ukrainians on surrender and transfer under the auspices of international law.”

With morale seemingly at rock-bottom in Vladimir Putin’s exhausted, hollowed-out army, her claim was entirely credible. The question is how many Russian troops in the Kherson pocket might follow suit and what happens to Putin’s war if his forces in Kherson melt away or give up like those in Kharkiv and the Donetsk region. Could the experts who predicted a long and grinding war over the coming winter, and beyond, be proven wrong?

The Kharkiv offensive, which has seen Ukrainian forces recapture thousands of square kilometers of territory in just a few days, has been a stunning success. Ukrainian forces are said to have reclaimed a further 20 settlements on Monday as Russian forces desert ever greater swaths of occupied land and flee back across the border. Soon Ukraine, whose forces have already reached the Russian border at some points, will be threatening areas held by Russia since Putin’s first invasion of the Donbas in 2014.

Once again, as when they foiled the original advance on Kyiv in February and March, Ukrainian commanders have made fools of the Russians. *The Guardian* newspaper reported over the weekend on how the long-rumored Kherson offensive, and the way it was repeatedly foreshadowed by Ukrainian officials, had been a “big special disinformation operation” designed to lure the Russians into reinforcing positions around Kherson. Once that had happened, Ukraine unleashed its newly acquired HIMARs rockets on the bridges across the Dnipro, cutting off the Kherson grouping from reinforcements and supplies.

That Kherson would be top of the list for a counteroffensive was entirely believable. It is the biggest city and only provincial capital captured by the Russians in six months of war. For the Russians, it was the gateway to the port of Odessa, the city the Russians most craved. For the Ukrainians, control of Kherson would open the path to Crimea.

Ukraine’s Southern Command confirmed the start of the Kherson offensive on Aug. 29, but urged people not to report on or speculate about its progress for reasons of “operational security.” For the first time, journalists were banned from the front lines.

But while the Kherson offensive was not quite a complete “feint”—fighting did pick up pace—the real action was about to unfold hundreds of kilometers away, where a well-armed, well-trained Ukrainian force launched a surprise assault on poorly defended Russian lines, capturing key strategic towns such as Balakliya, Kupiansk, and Iziurm over the space of a few days. Hundreds of Russians were killed and thousands reportedly captured in the assault.

The Washington Post [reported](#) Monday on how Russian forces were stealing cars and bicycles to make their escape, after having first stolen civilian clothes to fool Ukrainian drone squads.

“They just dropped rifles on the ground,” said Olena Matvienko, in Zaliznychnye, a village outside Kharkiv captured by the Russians in the opening days of the war but from which they fled in panic after the Ukrainian offensive.

“They came into our houses to take clothes so the drones wouldn’t see them in uniforms. They took our bicycles. Two of them pointed guns at my ex-husband until he handed them his car keys,” Matvienko said. The Russian collapse has thrown Putin’s TV propagandists and warmongers [into chaos](#), uncertain who should take the blame, and Putin himself refuses to acknowledge the crisis.

“The special military operation continues and will continue until the objectives that were originally set are achieved,” his spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said Monday.

HEADLINE	09/11 Ukraine firefighters at the front
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/11/ukraine-firefighters-donbas-war-russia/
GIST	<p>SLOVYANSK, Ukraine — Shortly after 4 a.m. Wednesday, Serhii Moskalets woke to the sound of a boom. Moments later his phone rang, as he knew it would. For the fire chief of a city being bombarded by Russian artillery, restful nights were an early casualty of war.</p> <p>“I usually wake up about that hour even when it is quiet,” Moskalets said. “That is when they tend to hit us.”</p> <p>This time it was a rocket, said the dispatcher. A building on Torska Street was struck: multiple floors on fire; massive structural damage. People were inside.</p> <p>In peacetime, the Slovyansk fire department’s work was largely limited to grass fires in the surrounding countryside and the kitchen and trash blazes typical for a city of 100,000.</p> <p>Now, Moskalets began to suit up for his new normal: burning blocks, collapsing building, mass casualties. His team has responded to more than 250 such events since June, when Russian artillery began to target the city as part of Moscow’s push to take over most of Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region. After one brutal barrage in July, his crews were battling 10 major blazes at one time.</p> <p>Firefighters are generally considered noncombatants under the rules of war — Moskalets said they never carry arms to comply with Geneva Conventions — but departments like his are fully engulfed by the battle for Ukraine. The workload is enormous, shifts are unending, and an already dangerous job must now be done in combat conditions.</p> <p>“They rush to the places where the Russian missiles hit moments after they land there, and don’t even wait for the air-raid sirens to stop,” said Vadim Lyakh, head of Slovyansk’s military administration.</p> <p>As Moskalets pulled on protective gear that still smelled of smoke from the last catastrophe, his battalion’s first engine pulled up some distance from the three-story block of apartments near the city center, a blaze visible in the back corner. Serhii Chaban, the crew’s field supervisor, jumped out, checked to make sure no one needed immediate first aid and began to scan the area.</p> <p>In normal times, the truck would get closer, faster. But wartime protocols now dictate they scout for hazards, such as shrapnel that could shred a tire and make a fast evacuation impossible, or something worse.</p> <p>“Our biggest concern is unexploded ordnance,” Moskalets said, “We have found cluster bombs, ballistic rockets. We can’t get too close.”</p> <p>Their other fear is a second attack, the so-called “double-knock” that hits after first responders have arrived on the scene. A few weeks ago, this same battalion was dousing a blaze set off by artillery on the outskirts of town when another shell landed less than 500 feet away.</p> <p>“They target us,” Moskalets said. “It’s hard to hide a firetruck.”</p> <p>Six firefighters from the area have been killed and 23 injured since the invasion began, according to Donetsk Regional Emergency Services. The fire station in the hard-hit city of Bakhmut had its windows blown out and garage doors shredded by a shell on Thursday morning, one of at least 14 fire-rescue buildings damaged by attacks in the region.</p> <p>At the scene, some of the men began dragging hoses from a pumper truck. One firefighter worked a hydraulic wedge into the warped entry door of an adjacent section of the building, popping it free. Five residents who had been trapped inside swarmed out into the cool morning air.</p>

Other firefighters interviewed the crowds of neighbors and residents gathered nearby to learn more about the building. At least three people lived in the section that was hit, they were told, two on the third floor and one on the ground level. Most of those apartments were now part of the burning pancake of beams and rafters collapsed into the basement. The chance of survival was tiny.

“We always have hope,” Moskalets said.

The crew would proceed the same, whether it was a rescue or recovery. First, they had to douse the fire.

But water is a problem in a city under siege. The municipal supply dries up when the power is cut by shelling, and one of the fire department’s new jobs is trucking water from the treatment plant to 80 plastic tanks that the government has placed around the city.

Now, their tanker truck was supplying their hoses. By the time the sun was above the rooflines, the flames were extinguished and the more dangerous work could begin.

The crew eyeballed the tilting hunks of concrete and brick looming over the cavity where they would be working for the next hours. Three of the four beams supporting the upper floors had been destroyed. The firefighters needed the last one to hold.

Moskalets, whose wife and daughters long ago left Slovyansk for the safety of Dnipro, repeated one of his favorite phrases: “Who else is going to do it?”

By 10 a.m., a crane belonging to the city water department had backed up to the edge of the smoking crater. Moskalets, Chaban, and three others jumped into the blackened pit to begin reverse engineering the collapse. Relaying signals to the crane operator, they tied the cables to one massive section of concrete and rebar after another, ducking to one side when the crushing loads swung overhead.

It is not a skill they learned in training, and sometimes the beams slip, said Edic Kravchuk, the crane operator. He, too, has seen his job transformed in recent months, from laying water mains to unpacking disaster areas.

“The main thing is how they tie off the load,” Kravchuk said. “Sometimes I have to jump down and show them.”

By noon, they had lifted more than a dozen chunks from the hole. More firefighters jumped down to shovel muddy soot and pull out smaller debris. One of them tugged on a pinned blanket.

“Misha, move all the stuff where you are standing to the side, where this blanket is,” said one, squatting by a concrete slab. “Can we hook the cable somehow here?”

The hooks came down and the men gave Kravchuk a thumbs up for the lift. But suddenly they yelled for him to stop. The cables quivered. The crew fell silent. Kravchuk killed the crane’s engine.

They had found a body.

The 58-year-old man had left the area earlier in the invasion, police said, declining to identify the victim by name. He had returned recently to Slovyansk to collect some of his belongings, only to become one of at least 22 city residents killed by Russian strikes so far.

It would take three more hours to uncover the bodies of the other two residents, a total of 12 hazardous hours of effort before the firefighters could return to their station.

There, where showers and electricity were iffy and their families were only visions on a screen, they would wait for the next call to come.

HEADLINE	09/12 Largest private-sector nurses strike in US
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/09/12/minnesota-nurses-strike/
GIST	<p>About 15,000 nurses in Minnesota walked off the job Monday to protest understaffing and overwork — marking the largest strike of private-sector nurses in U.S. history.</p> <p>Slated to last three days, the strike spotlights nationwide nursing shortages exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic that often result in patients not receiving adequate care.</p> <p>Minnesota nurses charge that some units go without a lead nurse on duty and that nurses fresh out of school are delegated assignments typically held by more experienced nurses, across some 16 hospitals where strikes are expected.</p> <p>The nurses are demanding a role in staffing plans, changes to shift scheduling practices and higher wages.</p> <p>“I can’t give my patients the care they deserve,” said Chris Rubesch, the vice president of the Minnesota Nurses Association and a nurse at Essentia Health in Duluth, Minn. “Call lights go unanswered. Patients should only be waiting for a few seconds or minutes if they’ve soiled themselves or their oxygen came unplugged or they need to go to the bathroom, but that can take 10 minutes or more. Those are things that can’t wait.”</p> <p>Paul Omodt, a spokesman for the Twin Cities Hospital Group, which represents four hospital systems where nurses are striking in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, said that the nurse’s union did not do everything it could to avoid a strike.</p> <p>“Nurses have steadfastly refused to go to mediation,” Omodt said. “Their choice is to strike. This strike is on the nurses.”</p> <p>Conny Bergerson, a spokeswoman for Allina Health, another hospital system in the Twin Cities where nurses are on strike, said “rushing to a strike before exhausting all options such as engaging a neutral federal mediator does not benefit our employees, patients or the communities we serve.”</p> <p>The Minnesota Nurses Association, the nurse’s union, said hospital administrators have continued to “refuse solutions” on understaffing or safety in contract negotiations. It said that nurses have increasingly been asked to take on more patients for bedside care to make up for labor shortages, exacerbating burnout and high turnover.</p> <p>Some hospitals have offered increased safety protocols for reporting security incidents in negotiations, but have not budged on other safety-and staffing-related demands.</p> <p>The union has proposed new mechanisms for nurses to have a stronger say in how wards are staffed, including a committee made up of nurses and management at each hospital that would determine appropriate staffing levels. They’ve also proposed protections against retaliation for nurses who report understaffing. Striking nurses at some hospitals said their shifts are often short five to 10 nurses, forcing nurses to take on more patients than they can handle.</p> <p>Omodt said that while there was a rise in understaffing reports during the height of covid, conditions have improved and nurses have made contradictory claims when it comes to staffing at their hospitals since then.</p> <p>In the lead-up to the strike, Minnesota hospital groups filed unfair labor practices charges against the union for refusing to go to mediation, and asked the National Labor Relations Board to block the strike for failing to provide enough notice. The NLRB has thrown out at least some of those charges.</p>

Hospitals facing strikes have been recruiting traveling nurses from across the region and plan to maintain staffing levels during the strike, though they are preparing for reduced operations, according to some of the hospital groups facing strike activity.

For years, hospitals in the United States have faced understaffing problems. A surge in demand and increased safety risks for nurses during the pandemic accelerated those trends. The number of health care workers in the United States has still not recovered to its pre-pandemic levels, down 37,000 workers compared with February 2020.

At the same time, demand for health-care services has steadily increased during the pandemic, with a backlog of people who delayed care now seeking medical attention. During the covid wave that swept across the United States this summer, states such as New York and Florida reported the worst nursing shortages in decades. Research shows that patients are more likely to die for preventable reasons when health-care providers are overworked.

Nurses, who risked their lives during the pandemic, are quitting and retiring early in droves, because of increased work loads caused by short staffing and demanding schedules that make finding child care and having a life outside of work exceedingly difficult. The understaffing crisis is pronounced in Minnesota in part because of its aging population and its record low unemployment rate.

The Minnesota Nurses Association recorded a 300 percent increase in nurses' reports of unsafe staffing levels on their shifts since 2014, up to 7,857 reports in 2021.

Kelley Anaas, 37, a nurse who works in the ICU at Abbott Northwestern in Minneapolis said nurses in her unit have been forced to double up on patient assignments and work with lead nurses who have less than a year of experience.

"It eats away at you. If that was my family member in that bed, I wouldn't want to leave their side," said Anaas, adding that her workload has increased steadily over her 14 years at Abbott Northwestern.

While the nurses say their main impetus for striking is staffing levels and not pay, they are also at odds with hospitals over wages. The Minnesota Nurses Association has proposed a 30 percent pay increase over the next three years, noting inflation is at 40-year highs, while health-care groups have proposed a pay increase of 10 to 12 percent.

"The union's wage demands remain at 29 and 30 percent increases over three years, which we've told them is unrealistic and unaffordable," Omodt said, noting that the average Minnesota nurse makes \$80,960 a year.

Contracts expired in May and June, and the union has been in negotiations since March.

Nurses said they are frustrated the strike is happening, but the stakes are high for them and their patients.

"We're really sad and disappointed that it has come to a strike," said Brianna Hnath, a nurse at North Memorial in Robbinsdale, Minn. "But we feel like this is the only thing we can do to show administration how incredibly important a strong nursing core is to a hospital. Hospitals tell us it's our fault, but we've been actively involved and getting nowhere."

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HEADLINE	09/12 'Greatest counteroffensive since WWII'
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/after-200-days-of-war-the-tide-has-turned-in-ukraines-favor
GIST	'GREATEST COUNTEROFFENSIVE SINCE WORLD WAR II': Military experts are gushing over Ukraine's stunning military advances over the past 72 hours, which broke through Russian lines in the Kharkiv region, reclaimed more than 1,200 square miles of occupied territory, and forced hundreds of

humiliated Russian troops to retreat in disarray, abandoning their equipment and running for their lives. “They just dropped rifles on the ground,” one villager [told](#) the *Washington Post*.

“Ukraine has launched the greatest counteroffensive since World War II,” said urban war expert **John Spencer** [on Twitter](#). “Look what they have done. They have achieved the unachievable.”

“We have to win. And this counteroffensive shows that we can win,” said Ukraine's ambassador to the United States, **Oksana Markarova**, on CBS. “We don't have any other choice. We will advance. As we said before, we will not surrender. And we will liberate all Ukraine because this is what we have to do, not only to restore our territory integrity, but to save all of our people who are under occupation.”

Videos posted on social media showed grateful Ukrainian's [kissing their liberators](#), while Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelensky** thanked his forces and warned there would be more tough fighting ahead. “You know better than anyone else: there is little romance in war and a lot of hard work,” Zelensky said in his [nightly video address](#). “The path to victory is a difficult one, but we are sure: you are capable of it ... Today, everyone sees and notes your actions in the north, south and east of Ukraine. The world is impressed.”

Meanwhile on Russian media, [critics were arguing](#) about who was responsible for the debacle and debating what Russian President **Vladimir Putin** should do next.

‘A MAJOR OPERATIONAL DEFEAT’: The momentum of Ukrainian forces grew over several days, beginning with the capture of the town of Balakliia, and then moving east to take the strategic rail hub and Kupiansk, which cut off supply lines and isolated Russian forces around Izyum to the south. That forced Russia to announce a “tactical regrouping” of its forces to the Donetsk region in the south. As of this morning, Ukrainian commanders claimed to have pushed enemy forces back to the Russian border in the north.

“Ukrainian forces have inflicted a major operational defeat on Russia, recapturing almost all Kharkiv Oblast in a rapid counter-offensive,” said the [latest campaign assessment](#) from the Institute for the Study of War. “The Ukrainian success resulted from skillful campaign design and execution that included efforts to maximize the impact of Western weapons systems such as HIMARS.”

The key takeaways listed by the ISW:

- Ukrainian recapture of Izyum ended the prospect that Russia could accomplish its stated objectives in Donetsk.
- The loss of Izyum dooms the initial Russian campaign plan for this phase of the war.
- Ukrainian pressure in Kherson combined with the rapid counter-offensive in Kharkiv presents the Russians with a terrible dilemma.
- While Ukraine has turned the tide of this war in its favor, The current counter-offensive will not end the war.

“Ukraine will have to launch subsequent counter-offensive operations, likely several, to finish the liberation of Russian-occupied territory. The war remains likely to stretch into 2023,” the ISW concludes. “Kyiv will likely increasingly dictate the location and nature of the major fighting, and Russia will find itself increasingly responding inadequately to growing Ukrainian physical and psychological pressure in successive military campaigns unless Moscow finds some way to regain the initiative.”

RUSSIA ‘STRUGGLING’ IN SOUTH: Meanwhile, while the gains have not been as dramatic, Ukraine is making progress in its efforts to isolate Russian forces west of the Dnipro river in Kherson province, according to British intelligence.

“Russia is likely struggling to bring sufficient reserves forward across the Dnipro River to the front line,” the British Defense Ministry said in its [daily Twitter update](#). “An improvised floating bridge Russia started over two weeks ago remains incomplete; Ukrainian long-range artillery is now probably hitting crossings of the Dnipro so frequently that Russia cannot carry out repairs to damaged road bridges.”

Both sides in the south spend a lot of time building temporary pontoon bridges, which tend to last less than a day. “We build them, they blow them up,” Ukrainian **Col. Roman Kostenko** [told](#) the *New York Times*. “They build them, we blow them up.”

“Building bridges and destroying the enemy’s, however unglamorous, low-tech and old-school as a military art, has nonetheless become a central tool for both sides in Ukraine’s counteroffensive in the south,” the *Times* dispatch from the front reported.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Oregon wildfire explodes in size
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/12/us/western-wildfires-air-quality-monday/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)An outburst of wildfires that broke out over the past week amid triple-digit temperatures across the West have forced thousands of evacuations and choked the air with smoke as strong winds complicated firefighting efforts.</p> <p>Nationwide, 92 active large wildland fires have torched nearly 728,000 acres -- the majority of them burning in northwestern states, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.</p> <p>Sweltering under rising temperatures, drought-ravaged Western states have become hotbeds of thirsty, dry brush that can fuel more volatile wildfires that burn hotter and for longer.</p> <p>In Oregon, where 10 wildfires were actively burning Sunday, containment of the Cedar Creek Fire -- sparked by a lightning storm on August 1 -- dropped from 12% to 0% as the fire exploded in size by more than 32,000 acres over the weekend, now swallowing 85,926 acres in very steep and difficult to access terrain.</p> <p>Driven by strong easterly winds, triple-digit temperatures and dry fuels, flames breached containment lines that firefighters have for weeks worked to build.</p> <p>Evacuations were ordered in Lane and Deschutes counties as the fire advanced, making wind-driven runs and threatening 2,230 homes and 443 commercial structures.</p> <p>On Sunday, fire officials said extreme weather from the past two days was easing, temperatures have started to cool and shifting winds have calmed.</p> <p>However, the blaze was still expected to advance through heavy fuels, officials said.</p> <p>As wildfires tore through the parched lands, Oregonians were also contending with power shutoffs. Thousands of customers in Oregon, including those in the suburbs of Portland, were without power for part of the weekend as Pacific Power implemented Public Safety Power Shutoffs to reduce wildfire risk as winds picked up.</p> <p>In Washington, where 14 fires were active Sunday, red flag warnings were in place across portions of the Washington Cascades through Sunday night as dry air and warm temperatures fueled fire behavior across the region.</p> <p>In California, residents saw both record rainfall and record heat in the same week, as what used to be Tropical Storm Kay made a rare close pass to the state amid a record-breaking heat wave.</p> <p>The lingering showers brought isolated flooding to some parts of Southern California, but also helped firefighters. Aided by ample moisture, rainfall and cooler temperatures, crews battling the Fairview Fire managed to shore up containment of the 28,307-acre blaze to 49% over the weekend.</p>

The fire -- which broke out last Monday in Riverside County and grew quickly -- has killed two civilians and injured a third, destroyed 35 buildings and forced thousands to evacuate, according to [Cal Fire](#).

On Saturday, a pilot and two fire personnel were injured when a helicopter assigned to the Fairview Fire crashed in a residential backyard while attempting to land at a local airport, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Some evacuation orders were reduced to warnings Sunday as scattered showers slowed the fire's spread, officials said. Full containment of the blaze was expected by Saturday, according to [Cal Fire](#).

To the north, the [Mosquito Fire](#) burning in both El Dorado and Placer counties had consumed 46,587 acres and was 10% contained as of Sunday as thick smoke settled over the blaze.

In Idaho, the [Moose Fire](#), about 17 miles north of the town of Salmon, has burned through 126,252 acres and was 37% contained Sunday. Dry and unstable conditions and potential gusty winds over the next day could increase fire behavior, officials said.

There was marginal risk for excessive rainfall through the overnight hours for parts of Southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Monday, the moisture in Southern California is forecast to spread to the north, bringing rain to northwest Arizona before heading into Nevada by Tuesday. A flood watch is already in effect for eastern Nevada from Tuesday through Wednesday night, CNN Meteorologist Robert Shackelford said.

Meanwhile, isolated dry storms are possible for northern Nevada Monday, which could spark new fires in that area, according to Shackelford. Also, eastern Montana is expected to see elevated fire weather risk due to 15 mph winds and very dry air.

Air quality worsens as wildfires rage

As numerous fires ravaged western states, air quality alerts were in place across much of Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

Skies turned orange and hazy in parts of Oregon over the weekend as winds carried smoke from the multiple fires burning in the state.

The smoke was so thick in Washington that it blocked some solar radiation and created temperatures that were cooler than anticipated, according to the [National Weather Service in Spokane](#).

Smoke can irritate the eyes and lungs and worsen some medical conditions. Those facing the highest risk are infants and young children, people with heart or lung disease, older adults and pregnant people. Many residents were [told](#) to stay inside if possible, keep windows and doors closed and avoid strenuous outdoor activity.

Recent [studies](#) have shown that being exposed to both extreme heat and wildfire smoke at the same time can worsen the health risks, and that's expected to become more of a threat, UCLA researchers said in a [study](#) published last month.

"Rising global temperatures and more frequent extreme heat events are expected to increase wildfire size and intensity, signaling a growing public health threat from concurrent heat-smoke exposure," researchers wrote.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Covid-19 booster, seasonal flu shot timing
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/12/health/covid-booster-flu-shot-timing-explained-wellness/index.html

(CNN) Fall and winter are around the corner, which means not only is it time to get your flu shot, but US health officials are urging everyone who is eligible to get their updated Covid-19 booster, too.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended the updated Covid-19 vaccine boosters this month, after the [US Food and Drug Administration's authorization](#). The updated Pfizer/BioNTech booster is authorized for people 12 and older, and Moderna's is authorized for 18 and older.

At the same time, health officials stress the recommendation to get your seasonal flu vaccine. Some disease forecasters worry that [the upcoming flu season could be a tough one](#) for North America, as nations in the Southern Hemisphere that already had their flu seasons -- like Australia and New Zealand -- saw higher-than-average peaks in cases. So, the United States could see flu make a comeback while Covid-19 is still circulating at higher levels.

Barring any new and concerning coronavirus variants, some officials predict that the updated Covid-19 shots could be the start of recommended boosters for Americans each year, similar to how updated annual flu vaccines are given.

"For a majority of Americans, one shot a year will provide a very high degree of protection against serious illness, and that's what we've got to be focused on," Dr. Ashish Jha, White House coronavirus response coordinator, told CNN last week. "Maybe for some high-risk people -- the elderly, the immunocompromised -- they may need protection more than once a year, but for a majority of Americans, that's where it is, and I think that's a really good place to be."

Where and when to get Covid-19 booster and flu shot

The updated Covid-19 vaccine booster and seasonal flu vaccines are available at most pharmacies, doctor's offices and health care clinics.

Not only are US health officials encouraging people to get both shots this year, some local public health departments are planning to schedule joint vaccine clinics, said Lori Tremmel Freeman, chief executive officer of the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

"Jurisdictions are going to be standing up joint flu and Covid vaccine clinics and other opportunities for people to get both their flu vaccine and their Covid updated booster together," Freeman said, adding that there is "no problem at all" with getting both shots at or around the same time.

The hope is for joint clinics to make it more convenient and accessible for people to get their vaccinations -- but not everyone might be interested or even eligible to get both vaccines at the same time. Plus, some say it's still early to get a flu shot.

A single dose of the updated Covid-19 booster is recommended at least two months after the initial vaccine series or your most recent booster.

"Now, suppose you've recovered from Covid -- and many people of course have had Covid this summer -- wait three months, at least," said Dr. William Schaffner, a professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

He added that it's important to get your booster as soon as you are eligible.

"It's clear that whether you're vaccinated or you've had Covid, if you get this booster, you will get much higher levels of antibody and they are thought to help us get more prolonged protection," he said. "The other thing that happens is that the immune system responds more broadly, and it looks as though we will get more broad coverage against other variants."

As for the flu shot, the recommended timing of vaccination for this flu season is similar to last season, [according to the CDC's website](#).

"For most people who need only one dose for the season, September and October are generally good times to get vaccinated," according to the CDC, adding that while "ideally" it's recommended to get vaccinated by the end of October, vaccination after October can still provide protection during the peak of flu season.

"The ideal time is during the month of October and maybe the first couple of weeks of November -- and the reason I say that is, particularly for older people and people who are frail, that will help their protection extend well through February into March, and that's when flu often peaks in the United States in February," Schaffner said. "Everyone ages 6 months and older should get influenza vaccine."

As for children younger than 12, who are not eligible for the updated Covid-19 booster, Schaffner said parents should focus on getting their youngsters vaccinated with the primary series or booster they can get now.

"I would say, maintain the current schedule," he said. "Because it's quite clear the original still does a good job in protecting us against hospitalizations and more severe disease."

Schaffner added that some people have asked him whether the Covid-19 vaccine protects against flu or vice versa. They do not.

"You do have to get both vaccines," he said. "The Covid vaccine will not protect against flu. The flu vaccine will not protect against Covid."

Bracing for possible Covid-19 surge

Last week, the Biden administration announced its [plan to manage Covid-19 this fall](#) as there is the potential for an increase in infections, in part due to waning immunity from vaccines and infection.

"Additionally, as the weather gets colder and people spend more time indoors, contagious viruses like COVID-19 can spread more easily," the announcement says. "And, as we saw last fall with the emergence of Omicron, we must continue to stay prepared for the possibility of a potential new variant of concern."

The White House continues to call on Congress to pass additional funding for Covid-19 response, having asked for an updated \$22.4 billion last week. GOP Sen. Mitt Romney said that passing that funding would be "a very hard lift."

The administration's plan to manage Covid-19 this fall includes focusing on encouraging updated booster vaccinations and making them easy to access, as well as ensuring that people have easy access to at-home rapid tests and treatments. That includes the purchase of 100 million additional at-home rapid tests from domestic manufacturers, the White House said.

The US Department of Health and Human Services "will launch a paid media campaign aimed at increasing COVID-19 vaccination, with a focus on those over age 50, as well as Black, Hispanic, rural, Asian American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native audiences through TV, radio, digital and print outlets."

The administration is also boosting "easy access to Covid-19 testing and treatments" but warned, "While the lack of additional COVID-19 funding from Congress puts constraints on what we are able to do, the Administration will do everything in its power to ensure that tests and treatments remain widely available and easy to access, and will encourage Americans to use them."

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HEADLINE	09/12 Baby formula remains in short supply
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/business/baby-formula-shortages.html
GIST	More than six months after one of the largest infant formula manufacturing plants in the United States issued a recall and was then shut down because of contamination concerns, a newborn staple remains in short supply.

In parts of the country, parents and their families are scrambling to locate precious containers of formula for their babies and many large retailers remain out of stock of popular brands. Some companies like Walmart and Target are limiting the number of containers that can be purchased at one time.

While the situation has improved since mid-July, the out-of-stock figures for powder formula on store shelves in late August remained at 23 percent, still above the 10 percent it was before the recall and shutdown, according to the Chicago-based market research firm IRI.

“It all depends on geography and the retailer,” said Brian Dittmeier, the senior director of public policy at the National WIC Association, a nonprofit organization. The WIC program provides nutritional assistance for women, infants and children, and accounts for about half the formula use in the country. “There are some locations,” Mr. Dittmeier said, “where the supply of infant formula is healthy and others where it is not.”

But even as the scarcity subsides, parents and caregivers say that the federal Food and Drug Administration, which regulates the formula industry, is not doing enough to address systemic problems exposed by the February shutdown of the Abbott Nutrition manufacturing plant in Sturgis, Mich., that set off the nationwide shortages.

The shutdown occurred after reports of [infections in four babies](#) — two of them fatal — who had consumed formula manufactured at the plant. On Feb. 17, two days after the shutdown, Abbott recalled [batches of three powdered formulas](#) over complaints of serious bacterial contamination. (Abbott has said that there is no “conclusive evidence” to link the company’s formulas to the illnesses.) That disruption made it clear just how dependent Americans were on a few formula manufacturers, and the Biden administration found itself scrambling to figure out how to make more product available.

The F.D.A. said it was now receiving weekly updates from domestic manufacturers and has arranged for nearly 18.9 million cans of formula to be brought in from abroad. “Is there enough formula to go around? The answer is yes, there already is enough formula here,” said Dr. Robert M. Califf, the commissioner of the F.D.A. “We just have to continue to work to get the distribution improved.” He noted, however, that it would take another couple of months before consumers see the broad array of formulas on store shelves that were available at the beginning of the year.

While the two other domestic manufacturers, Reckitt Benckiser, which makes the popular Enfamil brand of formula, and Perrigo, which manufactures generic formula for retailers, ramped up production at their factories, the F.D.A. also relaxed some of the restrictions on imports. The result was an avalanche of applications from manufacturers all over the world.

The U.S. market, estimated at \$2 billion to \$4 billion annually, has been notoriously tough for foreign formula companies to crack, owing to regulatory hurdles and tariffs.

While the foreign formula is only supposed to be allowed into the United States on a temporary basis, ending around Nov. 14, the F.D.A. said it would release guidance this month on how the new companies can continue to sell in the United States past this fall.

“Parents in the U.S. have been looking for a better product than what they were being offered,” said Will McMahon, one of the members of the family who owns the British baby formula Kendamil. The company has spent the last three years working through the formal process, including clinical trials, necessary to get its organic infant formula approved by the F.D.A.

Kendamil was one of the earliest formulas to get its application approved by the F.D.A. in the wake of the Sturgis plant shutdown, and the company has begun sending two million cans of formula to the United States.

But some parents say relying on foreign manufacturers is not a long-term solution. “It boggles my mind that the supply chain was so fragile and could be broken in such a major way,” said Christine Robinson, whose 8-month-old son is fed with formula.

Ms. Robinson said she worried that relying on non-U.S. brands could lead to issues for babies whose sensitive digestive systems do not adapt easily to change once the U.S. suppliers are able to ramp up production and the foreign formulas are phased out.

Ms. Robinson, who lives in Bucks County, Pa., said she would prefer that the F.D.A. streamline approvals for new American-made formula brands to diversify the market.

The F.D.A. has allowed more than a dozen non-U.S. companies to ship more than 18 million cans of formula into the United States, a mix of established manufacturers like Danone and Nestle in Europe but also smaller, lesser-known companies like Global Kosher, based in the United Kingdom, and Care A2+, an Australian company that started operations in October 2020.

But other larger global manufacturers that had formula available to ship were left on the sidelines. Some, like Organic-Family GmbH, a unit of the Swiss company Holle, said it had not gotten an update from the F.D.A. on its application. Thorben Nilewski, a managing director at GmbH, said in an email, “It feels like our offer or opinion isn’t really of interest at this point.” And the stock of the Australian formula manufacturer A2 Milk Company dropped in early August after it said the F.D.A. had notified it that it was “deferring further consideration” of its application to import formula into the United States.

In an emailed statement, the F.D.A. said the letters sent to firms did not mean that their formulas were unsafe, but rather that there were issues that would probably not be quickly resolved.

“There are a variety of reasons why certain infant formulas may not have been moved forward,” Dr. Susan Mayne, director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the F.D.A., said in an interview. “The key criteria for us was whether the manufacturer had formula available immediately as our goals were to get formula on the shelves as rapidly as possible.”

Priority was also given to applications from manufacturers that could provide medical and specialty formulas, she added. She said the agency was still reviewing applications.

In late August, Abbott said it was set to resume manufacturing of Similac formulas at its plant in Sturgis.

The company also said that it increased production at other U.S.-based manufacturing plants and one in Ireland, and that it would supply the United States with more than eight million pounds of formula in August, an increase from the year before. But it noted it would take six weeks for the Similac product from the Sturgis plant to start to hit store shelves.

But some industry experts say it will take time for Abbott to gain back the market share it once had. “To be frank, there is a lot of consumer mistrust around Similac right now,” said Mr. Dittmeier of the W.I.C. program.

That could be a boon for Reckitt Benckiser, which has been running its formula manufacturing plants at full tilt all summer, hoping to hold on to the market share it has gained at Abbott’s expense. Its market share has climbed to nearly 60 percent from 35 percent before the recall, said Robert Cleveland, who oversees the Mead Johnson nutrition business at Reckitt.

“We remain committed to making as much formula as we can,” Mr. Cleveland said. “We continue to maximize our domestic manufacturing, running overtime and going 24/7.” He added that the company had received approval to bring in formula from its plants in Singapore and specialty formula from its facilities in Mexico.

Still, in late August, when Lori Sharp, a first-time mother in Port Hueneme, Calif., realized she was down to one container of Reckitt's Enfamil Sensitive infant formula for her 3-month-old daughter, the formula was out of stock on Walmart.com.

Panicking, she scoured more websites and widened her geographic search. She eventually discovered a container of formula at a Target 40 minutes away in Moorpark, Calif. "I went into the store and they actually had four more, but their shelves were so bare," Ms. Sharp said. "I bought all of them."

In Georgia, some of the most acute shortages are in rural areas. Jennifer Kelly, who is the family services manager at the early Head Start program in Swainsboro, which is between Macon and Savannah, said trying to find formula earlier this summer had become a "daily chore."

The 14 babies she watches drink seven different kinds of formula. She and her staff were often driving to Walmart, Walgreens or a local grocery chain or scouring Amazon for some of the more obscure brands.

"It's not like it was a few months ago when the shelves were bare," Ms. Kelly said. "I am hoping we are on the other side of this dilemma."

When the formula shortage was at a crisis point in May, Ms. Robinson of Bucks County, Pa., created a Facebook group that connected parents around the country. The group, called Formula Hunters, does not exchange money to keep out profiteers who have been hoarding formula and seeking to resell it at a markup.

The group operates on the notion that a parent who buys a hard-to-find formula brand and sends it to another parent in the group will eventually be repaid when others do the same for them.

Formula Hunters now has 1,500 members, who are still actively helping each other locate formula. "This has been going on for so many months," Ms. Robinson said. "The frustration has been high."

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HEADLINE	09/12 Pro-Putin candidates in elections victory
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/12/world/ukraine-russia-war#russia-elections-results
GIST	<p>Against a backdrop of tightening press freedom and repression amid the war in Ukraine, Russians voted overwhelmingly for pro-Kremlin candidates in regional and municipal elections over the weekend, according to results published on Monday.</p> <p>Candidates nominated by the ruling United Russia Party or those loyal to the Kremlin won races for heads of all of the 14 Russian regions where elections were held, according to Russia's Central Electoral Commission. United Russia, the party of President Vladimir V. Putin, also won a majority in six regional legislatures where voting occurred, the commission said.</p> <p>In the city of Moscow, where lawmakers were up for election in most municipalities, more than 77 percent of seats went to pro-Kremlin candidates, according to Tass, a Russian state news agency.</p> <p>Many anti-government politicians have fled the country. Some have been sentenced to prison terms for publicly criticizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Although Mr. Putin has dominated Russian politics for more than two decades, he has long used elections that carry a veneer of competitiveness to try to legitimize his rule. And while the elections are often rife with fraud, they typically offer an opening for the political opposition to express discontent.</p> <p>In some instances, especially at the relatively low level of municipal councils, candidates who have been critical of the Kremlin were able to get elected. And on Monday, already-serving municipal deputies from 18 councils in Moscow and St. Petersburg signed a petition calling on Mr. Putin to resign. The petition came after a municipal council in St. Petersburg last week called on the State Duma, the lower house of</p>

parliament, to investigate Mr. Putin for treason over his decision to invade Ukraine. Those deputies have been charged by police with discrediting the Russian army, an administrative offense.

Mr. Putin's grip on Russia's political system has held largely because of his policymakers' ability to maintain relative economic stability. The elections this weekend were an early test of whether the economic upheaval caused by Western sanctions stemming from Mr. Putin's invasion of Ukraine has had an effect on voters.

They took place in the climate of almost total censorship of the mainstream press, making it hard to gauge people's true attitudes toward the government. Following the invasion in February, Mr. Putin tightened media laws, forcing the few remaining liberal news outlets to shut down.

The campaigning and voting periods were marred by multiple violations, according to [a report by Golos, a Russian elections watchdog](#), which cited official intimidation of election observers and unequal access to state media for opposition candidates.

The report called the elections "unfree and unequal," saying that "it is impossible to determine the real will of the voters under these conditions."

The elections were held over three days, which made them more vulnerable to fraud because election observers could not ensure the security of ballots overnight. Critics also said that online voting made it easier to falsify the results.

Still, some voters appeared to use their ballots to criticize the Kremlin or its war in Ukraine. Messages including "Russia without Putin!" or "For peace" were scrawled on some ballots, [according to photographs](#) posted on social media. The photos could not be independently verified.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Ukraine claims territorial progress in south
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/12/world/ukraine-russia-war#ukraine-also-claims-progress-in-the-south-and-redoubles-calls-for-russians-to-surrender
GIST	<p>The Ukrainian military claimed on Monday that it had retaken more territory in the south and was reiterating calls for Russian units fighting west of the Dnipro River in the Kherson region to surrender.</p> <p>As Ukraine makes advances in the northeast of the country, its military has been carrying out another campaign in the south. There, thousands of Russian soldiers west of the Dnipro River appear to be increasingly isolated as Ukrainian attacks erode Russian defenses and shell bridges over the river, cutting the Russians off from resupply.</p> <p>Natalia Gumenyuk, a spokeswoman for the southern command, told reporters on Monday that Ukrainian forces in the area had liberated nearly 500 square kilometers, or around 193 square miles and have been urging Russian forces to lay down their weapons. She added that some Russians have already abandoned their positions or surrendered, but declined to offer details. The claim could not be independently verified.</p> <p>"For quite a long time we engaged in a powerful information campaign by sending letters to them and communicating over the radio accurate information about how they can give up and get out of this," she said.</p> <p>The Ukrainian government has restricted access to journalists along the entire front line, and the situation in the south is particularly difficult to assess. Ukrainian soldiers fighting in Kherson have reported fierce battles in recent days.</p> <p>Many Ukrainians hope that the rout of Moscow's forces in parts of the northeast will ripple through Russian ranks and undermine morale all along the front. Since the start of the southern offensive,</p>

	<p>Ukrainians have expressed optimism that they could batter and isolate Russian forces enough to force their surrender, avoiding, where possible, head-to-head clashes with a well armed and dug-in enemy.</p> <p>Part of that effort is psychological, a military tactic used throughout history.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials on Monday posted videos of Ukrainian soldiers using loudspeakers to call for Russian soldiers on the battlefield to lay down their weapons.</p> <p>“Russian Ivan, surrender!” one soldier calls out in a video posted by an adviser to the Ukrainian interior ministry, Anton Gerashchenko. “We will protect you from the dictator Putin.”</p> <p>The location and timing of the video could not be immediately determined.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Seattle softer approach to in-office work
SOURCE	https://www.axios.com/local/seattle/2022/09/11/seattle-office-work-covid-restrictions-home?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axioslocal_seattle&stream=top
GIST	<p>As companies like Apple enact stricter return-to-office policies, many large employers in the Seattle area are reluctant to take such a hard line.</p> <p>Driving the news: Several businesses contacted by Axios in the past two weeks said they remain focused on giving their employees flexibility — which, in many cases, means letting them work from home most of the time.</p> <p>Zoom in: Meta, which owns Facebook and employs more than 8,000 people in the Seattle area, said it isn't currently mandating that employees work a certain number of days in the office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazon similarly hasn't instituted a companywide policy requiring workers to show up a minimum number of days per week, a spokesperson said. • Even some organizations leaning into in-office work are keeping it on the lighter side. Starting in October, Nordstrom aims for its hybrid teams to work in-person at least two days per week, a spokesperson told Axios. • That's less than Apple, which has started asking employees to come to the office a minimum of three days per week; or Google, where a spokesperson said employees are generally working about three days a week in person. <p>Why it matters: Washington's COVID-19 state of emergency is ending soon. But Seattle's downtown recovery continues to lag behind other cities, many of which didn't mandate COVID-19 business closures as early or as long.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent study from the Urban Displacement Project, a partnership between the University of California Berkeley and University of Toronto, found that downtown Seattle ranked 40th of 62 cities when it came to its rebound in downtown activity. <p>The big picture: Companies are trying to walk a fine line so as not to alienate employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to get people back to the office have failed before and data shows workers prefer remote work, Axios' Hope King writes. • Plus, tech companies — which employ a large portion of Seattle's workforce — face an additional challenge in pushing workers back toward the office, since their industry is what has made remote work possible, Axios' Scott Rosenberg writes. <p>What they're saying: Jon Scholes, president and CEO of the Seattle Downtown Association, said companies' flexible, sometimes vague policies regarding in-office work haven't done the city's downtown core many favors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still, data from his organization shows downtown Seattle has rebounded faster than Los Angeles or San Francisco — and that things are on the upswing, he said.

- Cell phone location data from July showed that workers were coming downtown at 40% of the level they did in 2019. That's more worker foot traffic than at any previous point in the pandemic, according to the association's [recovery dashboard](#).
- "We're seeing movement in the right direction over the last two months," Scholes told Axios.
- Scholes predicted that more companies would start imposing clearer and stricter expectations for in-office work this fall.

What we're watching: Whether workers will ever return to spending most of their time in the office — and how the answer to that question will shape the city going forward.

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Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	09/13 UN: Facebook 'items' of Myanmar war crimes
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/09/13/myanmar-Facebook-Meta-Rohingya-genocide-war-crimes-United-Nations/4781663044508/
GIST	<p>Sept. 13 (UPI) -- Social media giant Facebook has turned over "millions of items" to United Nations investigators that may support charges of war crimes and genocide against Myanmar's military, a top human rights official said.</p> <p>Nicholas Koumjian, head of the U.N. Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, said Monday that posts on Facebook were among the evidence his team has collected to build cases for international courts.</p> <p>"Facebook has shared with the mechanism millions of items from networks of accounts that were taken down by the company because they misrepresented their identity," Koumjian said in remarks to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva.</p> <p>The IIMM began operations three years ago to collect and preserve evidence around the August 2017 military crackdown on the Rohingya ethnic minority that forced more than 700,000 people to flee Myanmar.</p> <p>The country is currently facing genocide charges in the International Court of Justice over the brutal attacks on the Rohingya, which rights groups have argued were inflamed by hate speech on Facebook.</p> <p>"Our team has identified posts inciting fear and hatred of Rohingya that appeared on these military-controlled networks," Koumjian said.</p> <p>He cited one post that contained "false reports of Rohingya arming en masse and threatening Myanmar's Buddhists, and a photo of a cow with its stomach slit and disemboweled -- an image offensive to Myanmar Buddhists."</p> <p>Facebook parent company Meta released its first-ever human rights report in July, which concluded that "Meta had not done enough to help prevent our platform from being used to foment division and incite offline violence" in Myanmar.</p> <p>Amnesty International, however, called the Meta report a " cursory and selective analysis of the company's human rights impacts," and said it failed to address fundamental issues such as the way the social media platform's algorithms amplify harmful content.</p> <p>In February 2021, Myanmar's military overthrew the elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi on widely debunked charges of voter fraud.</p>

	<p>Under the junta's rule, the scope and scale of crimes against Myanmar's civilian population has intensified, Koumjian said Monday.</p> <p>"Since the military coup in February last year, there is increasing evidence of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, torture, deportation and forcible transfer, persecution, imprisonment and targeting of the civilian population," he said.</p> <p>The IIMM released a report last month that documented its findings of atrocities by the Myanmar military, including violence against women and children.</p> <p>"We have gathered reports of children in Myanmar having been tortured and arbitrarily detained, sometimes to target their parents," Koumjian said. "There is also increasing evidence of sexual and gender-based crimes against both women and men."</p> <p>In July, Myanmar executed four anti-coup activists after a closed-door trial by a military tribunal, sparking widespread condemnation over the country's first use of capital punishment in decades.</p> <p>"Imposing a death sentence on the basis of proceedings that do not satisfy the basic requirements of a fair trial can amount to a crime against humanity," Koumjian said.</p> <p>The IIMM has prepared 67 evidential and analytical packages to share with judicial authorities, including for proceedings at the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 FBI warns vulnerabilities in medical devices
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/fbi-warns-of-vulnerabilities-in-medical-devices-following-several-cisa-alerts/
GIST	<p>The FBI on Monday warned that hundreds of vulnerabilities in widely used medical devices are leaving a door open for cyberattacks.</p> <p>In a white notice from the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), the law enforcement agency said it has identified "an increasing number" of vulnerabilities posed by unpatched medical devices that run on outdated software and devices that lack adequate security features.</p> <p>The FBI specifically cited vulnerabilities found in insulin pumps, intracardiac defibrillators, mobile cardiac telemetry, pacemakers and intrathecal pain pumps, noting that malicious hackers could take over the devices and change readings, administer drug overdoses, or "otherwise endanger patient health."</p> <p>"Cyber threat actors exploiting medical device vulnerabilities adversely impact healthcare facilities' operational functions, patient safety, data confidentiality, and data integrity," the alert said.</p> <p>"Medical device vulnerabilities predominantly stem from device hardware design and device software management. Routine challenges include the use of standardized configurations, specialized configurations, including a substantial number of managed devices on the network, lack of device embedded security features, and the inability to upgrade those features."</p> <p>The FBI noted that medical device hardware is often used for more than 30 years at some healthcare facilities, giving cybercriminals and state actors ample time to discover and exploit bugs.</p> <p>Many legacy devices used by hospitals and clinics contain outdated software because they do not get manufacturer support for patches or updates, the FBI said, adding that many devices are not designed with security in mind.</p> <p>The white notice then quotes several reports from cybersecurity firms that highlighted the magnitude of the problem, most notably that about 53% of all connected medical devices and other internet of things (IoT) devices in hospitals had known critical vulnerabilities.</p>

One report found an average of 6.2 vulnerabilities per medical device and reported that more than 40% of medical devices are at the end-of-life stage, offering little to no security patches or upgrades.

The alert comes days after the multibillion-dollar healthcare company Baxter International [notified customers of four vulnerabilities](#) affecting their infusion pumps and WiFi batteries. CISA [released its own advisory](#) about the issues, the [second they released last week](#) related to medical devices.

In March, Palo Alto Networks security researchers [discovered that more than 100,000 infusion pumps](#) were susceptible to two known vulnerabilities that were disclosed in 2019.

Infusion pumps [have long been a source of ire for cybersecurity experts](#) and vendors who have spent more than a decade trying to improve their security. Palo Alto noted that the Food and Drug Administration announced [seven recalls for infusion pumps](#) or their components in 2021 and [nine more recalls in 2020](#).

Last year, German healthcare giant B. Braun [updated several faulty IV pumps](#) after McAfee discovered vulnerabilities allowing attackers to change doses.

Healthcare organizations continue to face a barrage of ransomware incidents and cyberattacks. Cybersecurity firm Proofpoint [released a report](#) last week that found 89% of healthcare professionals surveyed experienced at least one cyberattack in the last 12 months.

More than 20% of those attacked saw an increase in mortality rates and over half said the attacks caused longer patient stays, delays in procedures and overall decreases in the quality of care.

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HEADLINE	09/12 GhostSec 'Free Palestine' Israel campaign
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/palestinian-hacktivist-group-ghostsec.html
GIST	<p>A hacktivist collective called GhostSec has claimed credit for compromising as many as 55 Berghof programmable logic controllers (PLCs) used by Israeli organizations as part of a "Free Palestine" campaign.</p> <p>Industrial cybersecurity firm OTORIO, which dug deeper into the incident, said the breach was made possible owing to the fact that the PLCs were accessible through the Internet and were secured by trivially guessable credentials.</p> <p>Details of the compromise first came to light on September 4 after GhostSec shared a video on its Telegram channel demonstrating a successful login to the PLC's admin panel, in addition to dumping data from the hacked controllers.</p> <p>The Israeli company said the system dumps and screenshots were exported directly from the admin panel following unauthorized access to the controllers through their public IP addresses.</p> <p>GhostSec (aka Ghost Security), first identified in 2015, is a self-proclaimed vigilante group that was initially formed to target ISIS websites that preach Islamic extremism.</p> <p>Earlier this February, the group rallied its support for Ukraine in the immediate aftermath of Russia's military invasion of the country. Since late June, it has also participated in a campaign targeting Israeli organizations and enterprises.</p> <p>"The group pivoted from their regular operations and started to target multiple Israeli companies, presumably gaining access to various IoT interfaces and ICS/SCADA systems, which led to possible disruptions," Cyberint noted on July 14.</p>

Return to Top	<p>The attacks against Israeli targets, dubbed "#OpIsrael," is said to have commenced on June 28, 2022, citing "continuous attacks from Israel towards Palestinians."</p> <p>In the intervening period, GhostSec has carried out a number of attacks, including those aimed at internet-exposed interfaces belonging to Bezeq International and an ELNet power meter located at the Scientific Industries Center (Matam).</p> <p>The breach of Berghof PLCs, viewed in that light, is part of the actor's broader shift to strike the SCADA/ICS domain, although it appears to be a case wherein the group took advantage of "easily overlooked misconfigurations of industrial systems" to carry out the attacks.</p> <p>"Despite the low impact of this incident, this is a great example where a cyber attack could have easily been avoided by simple, proper configuration," the researchers said.</p> <p>"Disabling the public exposure of assets to the Internet, and maintaining a good password policy, especially changing the default login credentials, would cause the hackers' breach attempt to fail."</p> <p>GhostSec, in the meanwhile, has continued to post more screenshots, claiming to have gained access to another control panel that can be used to alter chlorine and pH levels in the water.</p> <p>"Hope you all can understand our decision on not attacking their pH levels and risking a chance to harm the innocents of #Israel," the group said in a tweet posted over the weekend. "Our 'war' has always been FOR the people not against them. #FreePalestine"</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 U-Haul discloses data breach
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/u-haul-discloses-data-breach-exposing-customer-driver-licenses/
GIST	<p>Moving and storage giant U-Haul International (U-Haul) disclosed a data breach after a customer contract search tool was hacked to access customers' names and driver's license information.</p> <p>Following an incident investigation started on July 12 after discovering the breach, the company found on August 1 that attackers accessed some customers' rental contracts between November 5, 2021, and April 5, 2022.</p> <p>"After an in-depth analysis, our investigation determined on September 7, 2022, the accessed information includes your name and driver's license or state identification number," U-Haul told affected customers in notification letters sent to impacted individuals on Friday.</p> <p>The attacker accessed the U-Haul rental contracts search portal after compromising two "unique passwords."</p> <p>While it didn't explain how the credentials were compromised, the company changed them after the breach was detected to block additional malicious activity.</p> <p>U-Haul email and customer facing websites were not affected by this incident. We want to assure you that it is safe to conduct business with our company and there has been no impact to business operations. — U-Haul</p> <p>No credit card info accessed by attackers</p> <p>U-Haul added that no credit card information was accessed or acquired during the incident because the compromised search tool does not provide users with access to payment card information.</p> <p>"The investigation determined an unauthorized person accessed the customer contract search tool and some customer contracts," the moving giant said.</p>

	<p>"None of our financial, payment processing or U-Haul email systems were involved; the access was limited to the customer contract search tool."</p> <p>U-Haul says it provides affected customers one year of free identity theft protection services through Equifax to help them detect when or if their personal information is misused.</p> <p>The American moving truck, trailer, and self-storage rental company has a network of more than 23,000 locations across the U.S. and Canada.</p> <p>It operates a fleet of roughly 186,000 trucks, 128,000 trailers, and 46,000 towing devices and is the third largest self-storage operator in North America.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Lorenz ransomware via phone systems
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/lorenz-ransomware-breaches-corporate-network-via-phone-systems/
GIST	<p>The Lorenz ransomware gang now uses a critical vulnerability in Mitel MiVoice VOIP appliances to breach enterprises, using their phone systems for initial access to their corporate networks.</p> <p>Arctic Wolf Labs security researchers spotted this new tactic after observing a significant overlap with Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) tied to ransomware attacks exploiting the CVE-2022-29499 bug for initial access, as Crowdstrike reported in June.</p> <p>While these incidents weren't linked to a specific ransomware gang, Arctic Wolf Labs was able to attribute similar malicious activity to the Lorenz gang with high confidence.</p> <p>"Initial malicious activity originated from a Mitel appliance sitting on the network perimeter," the security researchers revealed in a report published today.</p> <p>"Lorenz exploited CVE-2022-29499, a remote code execution vulnerability impacting the Mitel Service Appliance component of MiVoice Connect, to obtain a reverse shell and subsequently used Chisel as a tunnelling tool to pivot into the environment."</p> <p>This is an important addition to the gang's arsenal, given that Mitel Voice-over-IP (VoIP) products are used by organizations in critical sectors worldwide (including government agencies), with over 19,000 devices currently exposed to attacks over the Internet, per security expert Kevin Beaumont.</p> <p>Mitel has addressed the vulnerability by releasing security patches in early June 2022 after releasing a remediation script for affected MiVoice Connect versions in April.</p> <p>Threat actors recently exploited other security flaws impacting Mitel devices in record-breaking DDoS amplification attacks.</p> <p>Who is Lorenz?</p> <p>The Lorenz ransomware group has been targeting enterprise organizations worldwide since at least December 2020, demanding hundreds of thousands of dollars in ransom from each victim.</p> <p>Michael Gillespie of ID Ransomware has told BleepingComputer that the Lorenz encryptor is the same as the one used by a previous ransomware operation known as ThunderCrypt.</p> <p>This gang is also known for selling data stolen before encryption to other threat actors to pressure their victims into paying the ransom and selling access to its victims' internal networks to other cybercriminals along with the stolen data.</p>

If ransoms aren't paid after leaking the stolen data as password-protected RAR archives, Lorenz also releases the password to access the leaked archives to provide public access to the stolen files.

In June 2021, Dutch cybersecurity firm [Tesorion released a free Lorenz ransomware decryptor](#) that can be used to recover some file types, including Office documents, PDF files, images, and videos.

The list of previous victims includes [Hensoldt](#), a multinational defense contractor headquartered in Germany, and [Canada Post](#), the primary postal operator in Canada.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Ransomware attacks on retail increase
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/ransomware-attacks-on-retail-increase-average-retail-payment-grows-to-more-than-200k/?web_view=true
GIST	<p>More than 300 organizations in the retail industry said they were hit with ransomware attacks in 2021, according to a survey conducted by security company Sophos.</p> <p>Sophos researchers spoke to 422 IT workers at mid-sized organizations in the retail sector across 31 countries, finding startling increases in the number of respondents who said their organizations suffered ransomware attacks.</p> <p>Sophos said the 77% of respondents who were hit with ransomware in 2021 represented a 75% increase compared to 2020. The average ransomware payment grew from \$147,811 in 2020 to \$226,044 in 2021.</p> <p>The findings are part of a larger State of Ransomware in Retail 2022 report the company released, and researchers noted that retail had the highest rate of attacks of all industries surveyed.</p> <p>Chester Wisniewski, principal research scientist at Sophos, said what surprised him most was that while 77% of organizations reported a ransomware attack, somehow barely half thought the volume and complexity had increased.</p> <p>“This is very concerning as it suggests that despite their failures in defending themselves, they may not be taking the threat seriously enough. Security should be viewed similar to an insurance policy — money well spent preventing much costlier outcomes. With more than three in four organizations falling victim, it seems attacks are nearly inevitable,” he said.</p> <p>But one good aspect discovered by researchers was that the total cost of ransomware remediation dropped 46% to \$1.27 million from \$1.97 million in 2020.</p> <p>Wisniewski attributed this to insurance companies that know how to immediately intervene and lower the impacts to the business as well as professional services groups that have experience remediating ransomware every day and “know how to do it safely and efficiently.”</p> <p>“Additionally, ransomware payments in the retail industry were considerably below the global average of all sectors, with 41% of retail organizations reporting paying less than \$10,000 in ransoms compared to only 21% globally across all sectors,” he explained. “In 2020, only 28% of retail organizations reported paying ransoms below that threshold. Further, only 4% of retail organizations reported paying ransoms of more than \$1 million, compared to the global all-sector average of 11%.”</p> <p>The Sophos report notes that retail organizations that faced ransomware attacks experienced an above-average rate of data encryption compared to other industries and nearly all said the incidents impacted their ability to function.</p> <p>Ransomware groups have continued to attack retail organizations over the last three years.</p>

	<p>One of the largest supermarket chains serving multiple countries across southern Africa was hit with ransomware in June. Last July, one of Sweden's largest supermarket store chains, Coop, was forced to shut down nearly 800 stores across the country after one of its contractors was hit by ransomware in the aftermath of the wide-ranging Kaseya security incident.</p> <p>Two weeks ago, a retail technology provider for many of the world's largest airlines said it recently dealt with a ransomware attack impacting some of its systems.</p> <p>The Australian Cyber Security Centre released a warning last year about LockBit ransomware gang affiliates targeting companies "corporate systems in a variety of sectors including professional services, construction, manufacturing, retail and food."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Counterfeit medications sold online
SOURCE	https://www.vice.com/en/article/xgyy9k/fake-medications-sold-online
GIST	<p>The internet is home to a unique cast of villains, ominous figures we're all cautioned about: cyber bullies, identity thieves, hackers, seedy strangers. But at this particularly dismal moment in (digital) history, the web's most devious characters are not merely phishing scammers looking to con you into sharing your credit card info, but rather, more seemingly innocuous players: online pharmacies. "A 2021 survey by the Global Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies found that 95% of online pharmacies are operating illegally," says VICE News host and medical researcher Avisha Nessaiver. "That means, often, they're peddling fake drugs that may be laced with illegal substances."</p> <p>In a post-quarantine world, we've come to embrace virtual spaces as valid alternatives to things like in-person doctor visits and therapy sessions more than ever before — and as digital pharma becomes a more trusted resource, we're seeing a major uptick in online unlicensed pharmacies selling medicines without prescriptions at discount prices to unwitting patients. "This is one of those problems that doesn't get nearly the amount of public attention it deserves," says Rick Roberts, professor of medical sciences at the University of San Francisco. For him, the topic hits close to home: Back in the early aughts, he unknowingly purchased a counterfeit AIDS medication. "When it happened to me, nobody wanted to share their medical issues in public, so we weren't warning each other... but when I realized what had happened, I knew I had to talk about it."</p> <p>Several years passed, and Roberts thought that the dangers of the counterfeit medicine market had diminished substantially — until now. "I thought it was over, until the internet happened," he says. "Now, folks are ordering things from all over the world and the FDA doesn't have control over what happens outside of our borders."</p> <p>Fortunately, research and development teams at Pfizer are currently hard at work to slow down and better identify popular counterfeit medications in order to protect consumers. "Our main concern is the fact that people don't even know to be <i>worried</i> about fake medications," says Lev Kubiak, vice president and deputy security officer at Pfizer. "Plenty of false pharmacy sites will come up if you search for any medication online, so it's a huge risk." At Pfizer's labs, teams of trained chemists are dedicated to analyzing suspect medicines provided by law enforcement or customs, in the hopes of empowering doctors with the info they'll need to mitigate side effects from falsified drugs. "We can put a stop to this, with more research and consumer education," adds Kubiak.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 First cryptocurrency insider trading case
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/12/coinbase-crypto-currency-insider-trading
GIST	The brother of a former Coinbase Global Inc product manager pleaded guilty on Monday to a wire fraud conspiracy charge, in what US prosecutors have called the first insider trading case involving cryptocurrency.

Nikhil Wahi, 26, admitted during a virtual court hearing before US district judge Loretta Preska in Manhattan that he made trades based on confidential Coinbase information.

Prosecutors say Ishan Wahi, the former product manager, shared confidential information with his brother and their friend Sameer Ramani about new digital assets Coinbase was planning to let users trade.

Nikhil Wahi and Ramani then allegedly used ethereum blockchain wallets to acquire the assets and traded at least 14 times before Coinbase announcements in June 2021 and April 2022.

Those announcements typically caused the assets to rise in value and generated at least \$1.5m in gains, prosecutors said.

“I knew that it was wrong to receive Coinbase’s confidential information and make trades based on that confidential information,” Nikhil Wahi told the judge.

He said he understood that his guilty plea meant he would eventually be deported from the United States and “lose everything that I have worked for”.

Nikhil Wahi had pleaded guilty last month, but changed his plea through an agreement with prosecutors. His sentencing will be in December.

Ishan Wahi has pleaded not guilty and is next scheduled to appear in court on 22 March 2023. Ramani, who was also charged, is at large.

Coinbase, which said it shared with prosecutors its findings from an internal investigation into the trading, is one of the world’s largest cryptocurrency exchanges.

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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	09/12 UN: Taliban harass Afghan female workers
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/taliban-harassed-afghan-female-employees-89758466
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD -- The United Nations mission in Afghanistan has accused Taliban authorities of harassing its Afghan female employees, urging local officials to respect all its staff in a statement Monday.</p> <p>“There has been an emerging pattern of harassment of Afghan U.N. female staff by the de facto authorities,” the statement said, referring to the country's Taliban rulers.</p> <p>Three Afghan women working for the U.N. were recently detained briefly and questioned by "armed security agents of the de facto authorities,” it added.</p> <p>The U.N. called for an immediate end to all such acts of “intimidation and harassment targeting its Afghan female staff,” and reminded local authorities of their obligations under international law to guarantee the safety and security of all U.N. personnel operating in Afghanistan.</p> <p>A statement released by the Taliban late Monday evening denied that local authorities had “detained” any U.N. employees.</p> <p>The statement added in southern Kandahar province authorities had stopped a group of women, but when they realized they were U.N. employees, stopped questioning them.</p> <p>A year after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, teenage girls are still barred from school and women are required to cover themselves from head to toe in public, with only their eyes showing. Hard-liners</p>

	<p>appear to hold sway in the Taliban-led government, which imposed severe restrictions on access to education and jobs for girls and women, despite initial promises to the contrary.</p> <p>On Saturday, Taliban authorities shut down five girls' schools above the sixth grade in eastern Afghanistan's Paktia province which had briefly opened after a recommendation by tribal elders and school principals.</p> <p>Earlier this month, four girls' schools in Gardez, the provincial capital, and one in the Samkani district began operating without formal permission from the Taliban Education Ministry.</p> <p>On Saturday, all five schools were once again closed by authorities.</p> <p>The U.N. has repeatedly urged the Taliban to ensure respect for international human rights in the country.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Man sentenced 93yrs for 2014 murders
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/man-sentenced-93-years-murders-2014/281-426232db-5603-4deb-87d2-b4f869c3e8b7 https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/ali-muhammad-brown
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A man charged with committing four murders back in 2014, was sentenced to 93 more years in prison in a King County Superior courtroom on Friday.</p> <p>Police say Ali Muhammad Brown went on a killing spree as part of his "jihad against Americans."</p> <p>Police say on April 27, 2014, Brown shot and killed Leroy Henderson along a stretch of road in Skyway. Five weeks later, police say Brown's killing spree continued in Seattle when he took the lives of Ahmed Said and Dwone Anderson Young. Then he fled to New Jersey, where police say he killed a fourth man.</p> <p>Brown's appearance in court is what the families of three Washington victims have been waiting for over the last eight years.</p> <p>"Eight years I have been waiting for my justice," said Falana Young, the mother of Dwone Anderson Young.</p> <p>"Your Honor, please give him the maximum of whatever you can do," Dwone's grandmother, Shelly Young said.</p> <p>"I am regretful for killing those people," Brown said in court. "I ask for forgiveness from the families. I ask that they can forgive me. If they can't, if not, just let me rot in hell if you want to, if you want to say that, but that is not going to change the past."</p> <p>Brown was sentenced to life in prison without parole for the crimes he committed in New Jersey. On Friday, Judge Jim Rogers sentenced Brown to 1,118 months in the Department of Corrections. Brown is to serve that 93-year sentence consecutively.</p> <hr/> <p>Overview</p> <p>Ali Muhammad Brown is an American Islamic extremist responsible for four 2014 murders that he claimed were to take "vengeance" against U.S. policy in the Middle East.* Prior to the murders, Brown wrote in his journal that he intended to "follow" ISIS and "learn proper ways of jihadi training."* Brown is also believed to have supplied funds to the Somali-based terror group al-Shabaab, and was on a federal terrorism watch list.* In November of 2016 he was sentenced to 36 ½ years in prison for armed robbery and weapons charges,* and in April 2018 he was sentenced to life in prison without parole for murder. Both convictions were in New Jersey.* Brown was later extradited to Washington, where he faces three further counts of murder.*</p>

- Date of Birth
1985 or 1986

- Place of Birth
U.S.

- Place of Residence
Washington, U.S. (incarcerated)

- Extremist Use of Social Media
Not determined.

- Education
Not determined.

- Citizenship
U.S.

- Arrested
7/17/2014: first degree murder, first-degree robbery, and terrorism, among others

- Custody
U.S.

Brown was born in the United States in the mid-1980s. At the time of his first killing, he lived in Seattle, Washington, though news reports characterized Brown as “homeless” or “transient.”

Between January 2002 and November 2004, Brown and three other men allegedly committed check fraud in order to fund [al-Shabaab](#). The men deposited fake checks to numerous banks, including Bank of America and Wells Fargo, and withdrew funds before the checks bounced.* Brown was convicted on bank fraud charges, but federal agents were unable to prove the funds ultimately supported terrorism. Ruben Shumpert, the leader of the ring, was absent at his 2006 federal sentencing and is believed to have been killed while fighting for al-Shabaab.* In 2008, Brown was convicted on charges of assault.* In 2012, he was convicted on charges of communication with a minor for immoral purposes and was sentenced to a year in prison.*

In April 2014, Brown drove up behind a pedestrian named Leroy Henderson in Skyway, Washington, and shot him 10 times in the back. The two men did not know each other.* On June 1, 2014, Brown, utilizing a dating app, met two gay men, Dwone Anderson-Young and Ahmed Said, at a Seattle gay club.* The three men returned to the home of one of the victims, and, according to a police report, Brown “executed” them in the street.* Later in June, in West Orange, New Jersey, Brown and two suspected co-conspirators drove up next to a car operated by Brendan Tevlin at a traffic light. Brown exited the car and shot Tevlin—whom he did not know—eight times at close range.* Brown made use of fake IDs, camouflage, and disguises to evade the police for nearly a month following the final killing.*

As revealed in police interviews after the murders, in spring 2014 Brown felt compelled to act against the United States as vengeance for civilians, particularly children, whom Brown claimed were being killed by the U.S. government in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran. As Brown later said in a police interview, “[if] a man sees evil then he must take action against that evil.” Brown further admitted in his interview that he sought out adult males unaccompanied by females, children, or the elderly. He referred to these men as “just kills.”*

Following the final murder, Brown robbed two New Jersey men in separate incidents on June 29 and July 10.* On July 18, police discovered Brown hiding in the woods in a makeshift shelter in West Orange, New Jersey, only a couple hundred yards from the site of the July 10 robbery.*

	<p>In late July 2014, the state of New Jersey charged Brown with first-degree murder and first-degree robbery, among others.* The state of Washington later charged Brown on three counts of first-degree aggravated murder in August 2014.* In July 2015, Brown was indicted on terrorism charges in New Jersey—making it the first time New Jersey prosecutors used terrorism charges against a defendant in a murder case.*</p> <p>In August 2015, Brown pleaded “not guilty” to all charges in New Jersey.* In January 2016, a New Jersey court sentenced Brown to 36 ½ years in prison for robbery and weapons charges. On March 6, 2018, Brown pleaded guilty to Tevlin’s murder and to the murder of the three men in Seattle.* On April 24, 2018, he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole in New Jersey. At sentencing, Judge Ronald Wigler called Brown’s killing of Tevlin “one of the most heinous, horrific, brutal crimes” he had witnessed in eight years on the bench.*</p> <p>On October 30, 2019, Brown was extradited to Washington and booked into King’s County jail, following an executive agreement between the governors of New Jersey and Washington. He faces three charges of aggravated first-degree murder.* On November 13, 2019, he pleaded not guilty to all three counts. Once his Washington case is adjudicated, he will be returned to New Jersey to serve his life sentence there.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/13 Tribal spies help US win drone war on ISIS
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/tribal-spies-syria-help-us-win-drone-war-against-islamic-state-2022-09-13/
GIST	<p>AMMAN, Sept 13 (Reuters) - When the U.S. military targeted Islamic State commander Maher al-Agal with a drone strike in northern Syria in July, there was little chance it would miss. The reason? Revenge.</p> <p>With Islamic State's last battle-hardened forces holed up in remote areas, the United States is turning to the aid of tribesmen burning to exact revenge for the atrocities unleashed by the group when it ruled over swathes of Syria and Iraq.</p> <p>Still thirsty for vengeance eight years after the group, which is also known as Daesh, massacred hundreds of their clan, Sheitaat tribesmen in Syria had planted a tracking device on the motorbike Agal was riding when he was killed, one of the people who tracked him down said.</p> <p>The tribesman, whose account was confirmed by a Western intelligence officer in the region, said tribal relatives in contact with the Islamic State commander's immediate family had secretly been keeping tabs on him for months in northern Syria.</p> <p>"I exacted revenge in blood for those of my tribe whom Daesh crucified, executed and beheaded without mercy," the person, who declined to identified for security reasons, told Reuters by phone from Syria. "It has healed the burning in our hearts."</p> <p>In one of its bloodiest atrocities, Islamic State massacred more than 900 members of the Sheitaat tribe in three towns in Syria's eastern Deir al-Zor region in 2014 when they rebelled against jihadist rule.</p> <p>While Islamic State is a shadow of the group that ruled over a third of Syria and Iraq in a Caliphate declared in 2014, hundreds of fighters are still camped in desolate areas where neither the U.S.-led coalition nor the Syrian army, with support from Russia and Iranian-backed militias, exert full control.</p> <p>The Arab tribesmen in Syria seeking vengeance are now part of a growing network of tribal spies playing a significant role in the U.S. military's campaign to further degrade the group, three Western intelligence sources and six tribal sources said.</p> <p>"These networks of informants are working with the Americans who are planting them everywhere," said Yasser al Kassab, a tribal chief from the town of Gharanij in the Deir al-Zor area.</p>

"Informants from the same tribe are tipping off about their own cousins in Islamic State," he said.

Asked about the role of tribal informants in Syria, a U.S. military official said that in the operation against Agal, the targeting was almost entirely based on human intelligence.

"This is something that required a deep network in the region," said the official, who declined to be named as he was not authorised to speak publicly about the matter.

A DEEP NETWORK

The Western intelligence officer who confirmed the account of Agal's assassination, and the lengthy period of tracking by tribesmen before the strike, has been briefed on tribal support for counter-insurgency activities by the U.S.-led coalition.

The U.S. military, which has about 900 troops in northeastern Syria, said Agal was one of the group's top five leaders and had been responsible for developing Islamic State networks outside Iraq and Syria.

U.S. Central Command said at the time that the strike against Agal followed extensive planning.

With many of Islamic State's foreign commanders killed or detained, Syrians have become increasingly significant in its leadership, making the militants more vulnerable to penetration by fellow Syrians keen to settle scores, Western and regional intelligence sources and three senior tribal figures said.

While four sources familiar with the intelligence gathering operation say money is sometimes paid for information, many informants are driven by revenge for the atrocities committed by the group at the peak of its power.

Some informants were being recruited by tribal intermediaries who were already part of the network. Others were contributing directly via a phone line set up by the coalition to receive tips, Sheitaat tribal chief Kassab said.

The U.S. military officer confirmed that informants were paid but did not elaborate.

The U.S.-financed tribal networks have penetrated Islamic State sleeper cells and compiled data on new recruits, who include fellow tribesmen in some cases, five tribal sources said. The three Western intelligence officers and a regional security official corroborated their accounts.

Many of the spies come from the Sheitaat tribe, an offshoot of Syria's biggest tribe, the Akaidat, who fought with U.S.-backed forces to drive Islamic State from swathes of northeast Syria, taking the city of Raqqa after a long battle in 2017.

"They want revenge so they resort to cooperating with their relatives to leak information and give locations of leaders of IS. They use the tribal links," said Samer al Ahmad, an expert on jihadist groups who comes from the region.

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

One of the Western intelligence officers said human intelligence - as opposed to information gathered from devices such as mobile phones - was now crucial because the militants increasingly avoid means of communication prone to surveillance.

"Most of the new operatives do not use mobile or gadgets that were behind the major past hits of foreign jihadists," said the officer, who is familiar with some of the covert effort.

Such human intelligence has been "critical" in the drive to kill and detain top militants in Syria since the start of the year and played a key role in Agal's case, the U.S. military official said.

"A lot of times, human intelligence is going to complement your other forms of intelligence, information you pick up from there or from voice signals and you can supplement it. In that case it really led the collection," the official said.

Agal had been hiding in plain sight in northern Syria, spending most of his time in territory held by Sunni Arab insurgents backed by Turkey and mostly steering clear of areas closer to his home town where he might be recognised, two of his relatives said.

His death marked one of several blows against Islamic State in Syria this year.

In February, the group's leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Quraishi died during a U.S. special forces raid in northern Syria, while in June U.S. forces seized another senior leader, Ahmad al Kurdi.

Agal, Kurdi and the other militants who were targeted had slipped back into normal life, mingling among inhabitants of a heavily populated area along the Turkish border away from areas controlled by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

HIT-AND-RUN ATTACKS

The successful U.S. strikes have heartened Ahmad Assad al Hassouni, a senior figure in the Sheitaat tribe who is still searching for the remains of two of his four sons beheaded by Islamic State in 2014.

"They slaughtered my sons and burnt our hearts," he said. "I swear by God I won't sleep until the last criminal is dead,"

Although Islamic State increasingly lacks the capacity to stage large spectacular attacks, its presence is growing in remote areas of Deir al-Zor where control by the Kurdish-led SDF is shaky, residents said.

At night, masked men set up checkpoints sowing fear in villages near Busayrah along the Euphrates river, five tribal sources said.

Hit-and-run attacks on SDF checkpoints, meanwhile, have also increased in recent months, tribal chief Sheikh Basheer Dandal said, and the militants have also inflicted heavy casualties on pro-Iranian militias around Palmyra.

It was fear of a resurgence of Islamic State that spurred 32-year-old Abdullah al Omar to inform on his own relatives.

"I tipped the coalition about five people, including two cousins among my tribe whom we found out had been with Daesh, running checkpoints, burning homes," said Omar, who comes from Abu Hamam by the Euphrates south of Busayrah.

"We cannot sleep peacefully at night because we know they are still there just waiting for the right time to take revenge and slaughter those who survived their massacres."

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HEADLINE	09/12 Al Qaeda releases book: planning 9/11
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/al-qaeda-releases-book-detailing-planning-of-terror-attacks
GIST	<p>Al Qaeda leaders reportedly released a book over the weekend detailing the timeline leading up to the 9/11 terror attacks, coinciding with the 21st anniversary of the attacks that left almost 3,000 people dead in three locations.</p> <p>The book was written by one of the group's senior leaders, Abu Muhammad al Masri, who was killed in Iran in 2020, according to the News Agency of Nigeria. The book details the timeline of the attack, noting that al Qaeda began planning attacks on the United States in 1996 with the intention to drag the U.S. military into a long-term war, the outlet reported.</p>

	<p>An Egyptian pilot initially suggested flying a civilian plane into “an important and symbolic American building” while carrying thousands of gallons of flammable materials, according to the book. Group members were then chosen in 1998 to enlist in further combat training and enroll in aviation schools, the outlet reported.</p> <p>On Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked three U.S. planes and crashed two into the Twin Towers in New York City and another into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.</p> <p>A fourth plane was also hijacked, but passengers were able to overcome the pilots and crash the plane in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. It’s believed the plane was either headed toward the Capitol or the White House.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Somali forces: offensive retakes 20 villages
SOURCE	https://www.voanews.com/a/somali-military-says-offensive-retakes-20-villages-from-militants-/6743812.html
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU, SOMALIA — Somalia's military says an offensive in the central Hiran region has captured 20 villages that were occupied by the Islamist militant group al-Shabab.</p> <p>A Somali National Army commander, Captain Mohamed Ibrahim Daud, told VOA by phone Monday that army troops backed by armed locals have killed more than 100 al-Shabab fighters and also "liberated" 20 villages from the al-Qaida-affiliated group.</p> <p>He said the retaken villages include several key locations in Hiran region, including the small town of Fidow near Somalia's border with Ethiopia.</p> <p>Daud said troops captured another 20 militants alive.</p> <p>He acknowledged that the army received air support during the operations, without naming a country.</p> <p>In a statement issued Sunday night, Somali Information Ministry said the operations were the first step in implementing the government's vision of fighting terrorism and getting rid of al-Shabab "all over the country."</p> <p>"The Somali government is committed to remove al-Shabab as a threat to the Somali people," the statement said.</p> <p>Abdulkarim Abdulle, a Mogadishu-based independent security analyst, told VOA via WhatsApp that local militias are determined to work with the security forces to eliminate al-Shabab in the regions.</p> <p>He said the Macwisley — referring to local militia — is something that Somali government encouraged in the population, and they decided to liberate themselves from al-Shabab. Without them, Abdulle said, the operations could not succeed.</p> <p>Al-Shabab did not comment on the government's claims, but said it carried out a series of bomb attacks in the Hiran region targeting Somali security forces.</p> <p>Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud declared a "total war" against al-Shabab in August 2022, after the group staged a deadly hotel siege in the capital Mogadishu that killed 21 people and wounded more than 100 others.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/13 Neo-Nazi groups on rise in Australia
SOURCE	https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/national/aussie-neonazi-groups-now-targeting-society-at-large/news-story/f40f9f172df4db71c8980e9b0ca0dc8d
GIST	Neo-Nazi groups are on the rise in Australia and they’re now more dangerous than ever.

That's according to Dr Kristy Campion, a professor from Charles Sturt University who is an expert on right wing extremism and terrorism.

"They pose a genuine security risk," Dr Campion told news.com.au's podcast, [I've Got News For You](#). "Not just because of the threat they pose to life, but also the threat they pose to our values."

"In recent years, we've seen quite a substantial number of neo-Nazi's being charged or at least prosecuted for some very serious offences," Dr Campion said. "These range from improvised explosive devices to sharing bomb making instructions, 3D weapons, firearms possession ... stockpiling weapons and ammunition."

Dr Campion said what's also worrying is that far-right groups have now widened their targets.

"What makes this different is that in the past, their violence was typically more sort of arson attacks against symbolic targets such as synagogues and mosques, or it was generally directed at each other," she said. "(But now) it has become directed more at society at large."

"We've seen right wing extremists who have been convicted of terrorism act offences targeting everyday Australians, or people who might adhere to left wing political beliefs, people who might simply be protesting an issue that (neo-Nazis) happen to oppose – so the violence has become directed more at society now than what it was in the past," she told podcast host Andrew Bucklow.

In 2020, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) said that 40 per cent of its case load was dedicated to homegrown far-right violent extremist groups.

In 2016, that number was just 10 to 15 per cent.

Little is known about how many neo-Nazi groups there are in Australia or how many members they have, but Dr Campion told *I've Got News For You* that the true number could be "wild".

"It's impossible to quantify exactly how many neo-Nazis we have in Australia, and one of the reasons for that is that these sorts of organisations do tend to be quite short lived," Dr Campion said.

"We do see groups emerge, they might not even make it to the media, they might just emerge as like a Facebook group or on some other online medium and they'll be active for a little while but then they do tend to disintegrate and fall apart."

"Or, as we've seen happen with some prominent groups in Australia, they actually evolve and change over time and they do tend to endure in some way, shape or form."

"When it comes to support for the organisation, those numbers change, and it could be quite a wild number."

Earlier this year, Victoria become the first Australian state to make [displaying a Nazi swastika](#) a punishable offence.

Individuals found in breach of the new legislation will face up to 12 months in prison and fines of almost \$22,000.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Violent extremism in Mozambique
SOURCE	https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/explainer-what-is-driving-violent-extremism-in-mozambique-20220912

The European Union Peace facility last week agreed to support the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) through a R259 million purse.

The fund is part of the general programme for support to the African Union in 2022-2024 under the European Peace Facility (EPF).

The agreed-upon assistance will provide SAMIM's military component with collective equipment at the company level, including camp fortifications and storage containers, medical equipment, vehicles and boats, and technical devices.

This strand of EPF aid supplements the continuing R1.54 billion assistance to the Mozambican armed forces, which provides equipment and supplies - not meant to deliver lethal force - to the country's military forces trained by the EU training mission in Mozambique.

In 2016 the Institute of Economics and Peace issued the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) which ranked Mozambique among 51 countries affected by terrorism.

By 2020, the country had become one of the world's top 15 most affected countries by Islamic extremists. Civic society in Mozambique has since called for an "all hands on deck" approach to end the insurgency.

The Institute for Security Studies' (ISS) recent report on violent extremism in Mozambique looked at the drivers and links to transnational organised crime.

Findings

The report notes the long-held view that poor governance has provided fertile ground for increased insurgency linked to the "resource curse".

The report states:

The discovery and poor governance of natural resources, such as rubies and liquefied natural gas, have escalated terrorism.

Cabo Delgado is one of the most underdeveloped areas in Mozambique with a legacy of exclusion that can be traced back for at least two decades.

The report found that regionalism, not ethnicity, in Cabo Delgado is the major grievance in the community, and has resulted in communities in Cabo Delgado resenting the elite.

However, that does not explain how people joined the insurgency.

"Despite resentment of the elite, who are blamed for the region's poverty, there is no evidence that people are voluntarily joining the insurgency en masse," the report said.

But those that join, are recruited in mosques, Islamic centres and local markets. Recruits are radicalised by appealing to their economic status and religious inclination.

While SAMIM and the Rwandan defence force have managed to drive away insurgents in some parts of the province, there are fears that the fighting could spread to other parts of the country as terrorist groups retreat to find new bases.

The operations by foreign forces have to some extent stopped mass recruitments but also forced insurgents to evolve into professional, well-trained groups, practising guerrilla warfare.

Guerrilla fighters by nature are protected and supported by the communities they fight in.

Recommendations to the Mozambique government.

	<p>Numerous reports, including the ISS one, have called for the government of Mozambique to "partner with local organisations to address legitimate grievances.</p> <p>In the process, they have to develop a national strategy covering all aspects of the crisis such as amnesty for insurgents, and a solid judiciary system that will deal with terrorism-related crimes.</p> <p>On the security cluster, the report recommended, the establishment of "a centralised national inter-agency counter-terrorism unit, and prioritise coordination and intelligence-led military operations".</p> <p>There have been reports of insurgents launching their operations from the southern parts of Tanzania, as such, Mozambique should strengthen intelligence sharing with neighbouring countries.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Mozambique extremists spread to Nampula
SOURCE	https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/hudson-valley/ap-top-news/2022/09/12/mozambiques-jihadis-spread-into-most-populous-province
GIST	<p>MAPUTO, Mozambique (AP) — Extremists allied with the Islamic State group have spread their attacks further south into Mozambique's most populous province, Nampula, including an assault on a Catholic mission in which an Italian nun was among those killed.</p> <p>The extremists first struck the province earlier this month and have sustained the offensive, attacking rural centers and beheading some residents.</p> <p>Their insurgency had been confined to Mozambique's northernmost Cabo Delgado province, where an estimated 4,000 people have been killed and 950,000 displaced over four years.</p> <p>The violence has also disrupted big economic projects, including one by the France-based TotalEnergies to produce liquified natural gas and the development of a large mine to extract graphite to make lithium batteries for Tesla motors.</p> <p>The extremists' push into Nampula comes despite the deployment for more than a year of a military force from the 16-nation Southern Africa Development Community, along with troops from Rwanda, in support of the Mozambican military.</p> <p>The Islamic State Mozambique Province group has claimed responsibility for setting fire to two churches and more than 120 homes of Christians last week in Nampula province.</p> <p>In their attack on the Catholic Chipene Mission, the jihadi rebels shot and killed Sister Maria de Coppi and set fire to the church, health center and residential quarters, according to Mozambican reports.</p> <p>At the Vatican on Sunday, Pope Francis said he was remembering in prayer the 83-year-old Italian nun who had "served with love for nearly 60 years" as a Comboni missionary in Mozambique.</p> <p>"The population is disoriented and suffers a lot because they live in uncertainty and do not know what to do, many are fleeing but do not know where to go," the Archbishop of Nampula, Inacio Saure, said in comments carried by Agenzia Fides, the Vatican news agency.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Pair plead guilty: attempt support to ISIS
SOURCE	https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/new-york-city-man-and-alabama-woman-plead-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-isis
GIST	Today in the Southern District of New York, Arwa Muthana, 30, of Hoover Alabama, pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, aka ISIS, a designated

foreign terrorist organization. On Friday, her husband James Bradley, aka Abdullah, 21, of the Bronx, entered a guilty plea to the same charge.

According to court documents, Bradley and Muthana are ISIS supporters who attempted to travel to the Middle East to join and fight for ISIS. Bradley expressed violent extremist views since at least 2019, including his desire to support ISIS by traveling overseas to join the group or committing a terrorist attack in the United States. In May 2020, Bradley stated to an undercover law enforcement officer (UC-1) that he believed that ISIS may be good for Muslims because ISIS was establishing a caliphate. Bradley further expressed his desire to conduct a terrorist attack in the United States and discussed potentially attacking the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York. Bradley explained that if he could not leave the United States, he would do “something” in the United States instead, referring to carrying out an attack.

In June 2020, Bradley reaffirmed his interest to UC-1 in attacking a military base, and that doing so would be his contribution to the cause of jihad. In January 2021, Bradley mentioned to UC-1 another university in New York State where he frequently saw Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadets training. Bradley stated that he could use his truck in an attack, and that he along with Muthana could take all of the ROTC cadets “out.”

In late January 2021, Bradley married Muthana in an Islamic marriage ceremony. Beginning before and continuing after their marriage, Bradley and Muthana discussed, planned and ultimately attempted to travel to the Middle East together to join and fight with ISIS. In or about early March 2021, Bradley traveled from New York to Alabama to visit Muthana, and Bradley and Muthana traveled back to New York together, to travel from New York to join ISIS in the Middle East. Thereafter, Bradley raised the possibility of UC-1 helping Bradley and Muthana get on a cargo ship to travel to Asia or Africa for the purpose of ultimately joining and fighting for ISIS. UC-1 subsequently put Bradley in contact with a purported associate who could assist Bradley in making arrangements for Bradley and Muthana to travel to the Middle East via cargo ship. In reality, the purported facilitator was a law enforcement officer acting in an undercover capacity (UC-2).

Later in March 2021, Bradley met with UC-2 and expressed his desire to travel via cargo ship and to “fight among the rank[s] of the Islamic State.” Bradley subsequently provided UC-2 \$1,000 in cash as travel costs for Bradley and Muthana to take a cargo ship to Yemen. Bradley told UC-2 that he and Muthana both planned to be “fighting” after arriving in the Middle East. Bradley also told UC-2 that he had a dream that he had given “bay’ah,” an Arabic term meaning the oath of allegiance, to Abu Ibrahim al-hashimi al-Qurashi, the former leader of ISIS.

On March 25, 2021, UC-2 told Bradley that the cargo ship would be leaving on March 31, from a seaport in Newark, New Jersey. Bradley praised Allah and confirmed he and Muthana planned to travel on the ship. On March 31, 2021, Bradley and Muthana met with UC-2 on the way to the seaport. During this meeting, Muthana confirmed to UC-2 that she was traveling to the Middle East to fight for ISIS. Bradley and Muthana were arrested as they walked on a gangplank to board the cargo ship. After Muthana was arrested, she waived her Miranda rights and stated during an interview that she was willing to fight and kill Americans if it was for Allah. Also on March 31, 2021, in connection with a court-authorized search, the FBI seized from a bedroom previously used by Bradley what appears to be a hand-drawn image of a jihadi flag commonly used by ISIS and a hand-drawn map of the Pakistan region.

In the months and years prior to their arrests, Bradley and Muthana also accessed, posted and distributed extremist online content, including materials indicative of their support for ISIS. Such material included Bradley’s postings of images of ISIS fighters, Usama Bin Laden, and terrorist attacks, and his distribution to UC-1 of videos of ISIS fighters, a 2020 stabbing attack against a New York City Police Department officer, and extremists shooting a uniformed soldier. Content on Muthana’s cellphone, which was searched pursuant to a court-authorized search warrant, included images of an ISIS flag with Arabic writing, firearms, ISIS propaganda, and quotations of the deceased extremist preacher and former al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula member Anwar al-Awlaki, including, for example, a copy of the cover of a book authored by al-Awlaki and titled “44 Ways to Support Jihad.”

	<p>Bradley and Muthana each pleaded guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.</p> <p>Bradley is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Engelmayer on Feb. 2, 2023, and Muthana is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Engelmayer on Feb. 3, 2023.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	09/13 Australia braces: unusually heavy rains
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/13/australia/australia-la-nina-weather-climate-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>Much of Australia will face unusually heavy rains in coming months, the country's weather forecaster said on Tuesday, after confirming that a La Niña weather event is under way for the third year in a row and would likely last into next year.</p> <p>The Bureau of Meteorology firmed up its guidance for this year for the weather pattern known in Australia to produce wet, windy summers, saying it was now under way after it previously had forecast a high chance.</p> <p>The event puts the country's densely populated east coast on alert when many residents are still rebuilding after floods linked to the most recent La Niña, which ran into early 2022.</p> <p>The weather phenomenon was among factors that would "push Australia's climate towards a wetter phase and ... have shaped our outlook for the coming months that shows more than 80% chance of above average rainfall for many parts of the eastern half of Australia," the bureau said in a statement.</p> <p>Wild weather swings in Australia brought its worst bushfires in a generation in late 2019 and early 2020, followed by two La Niña patterns, which swelled rivers beyond their banks and left thousands of flooded homes uninhabitable.</p> <p>"This is not good news for communities, businesses, homeowners, and renters who are living or operating out of buildings and dwellings that are at risk from inundation," said Mark Gibbs, an adjunct professor with Queensland University of Technology's Institute for Future Environments.</p> <p>"This may be particularly problematic for those that are still recovering from recent floods, especially in light of the present challenges in securing the services of builders and building suppliers," he added.</p> <p>With La Niña, sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean are cooler than normal, while waters in the western tropical Pacific are warmer than normal, generating moisture that brings rain to eastern and central Australia.</p> <p>La Niña and climate change</p> <p>While La Niña – an the opposite El Niño – events are regular aspects of global weather patterns, increased global temperatures may temper or change their effects. La Niña tends to pull down global temperatures, but in recent years, the planet has warmed so fast, it's like hitting a small speed bump at 80 mph – it barely even registers.</p> <p>It's likely too early to know how climate change will affect those patterns; research is beginning to show how a warming climate may amplify the effects of El Niño and La Niña. Climate change could increase the severity of weather events stemming from El Niño and La Niña patterns, according to a 2018 study on atmospheric conditions that ran simulations of climate conditions.</p>

	Top spots on the warmest-years list used to be reserved for the strong El Niño years, but human influences have long since overwhelmed the planet's natural temperature regulators. For instance, La Niña was present during parts of 2020, but the year still tied with 2016 (an El Niño year) as the hottest on record for the planet.
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HEADLINE	09/13 Pakistan floods: up to 6mo. to recede
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/13/asia/pakistan-floods-six-months-clear-water-intl-hnk/index.html
GIST	<p>Authorities in Pakistan have warned it could take up to six months for deadly flood waters to recede in the country's hardest-hit areas, as fears rise over the threat posed by waterborne diseases including cholera and dengue.</p> <p>Floods caused by record monsoon rains and melting glaciers in Pakistan's northern mountain regions have so far claimed the lives of more than 1,400 people, and affected an estimated 33 million more, washing away homes, roads, railways, livestock and crops. Damages are now expected to total more than \$30 billion – triple that of an earlier estimate of around \$10 billion.</p> <p>“Karachi is seeing an outbreak of dengue as hundreds and thousands of patients are reporting daily at government and private hospitals. The dengue cases this year are 50% higher than last year. With 584,246 people in camps throughout the country, the health crisis could wreak havoc if it will go unchecked,” Pakistan's climate minister Sherry Rehman said Monday.</p> <p>Rehman warned the country was now facing the prospect of massive food shortages, owing to the destruction of up to 70% of staple crops such as rice and maize, and urgently needed “food, tents and medicines.”</p> <p>Rising flood waters also remain a risk, especially in hard hit areas along the Indus River in Sindh province, with meteorological forecasts indicating continuous rainfall is expected to stretch through September.</p> <p>In a statement Monday, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said the prolonged monsoon rains will push back efforts to clear the water, with estimates ranging from 3 to 6 months in some of the worst affected areas.</p> <p>He added that the country's largest freshwater lake, Manchar, has been overflowing since early September, with flood waters impacting several hundred villages and more than 100,000 people.</p> <p>“We are expediting our efforts to provide medicines and medics to the 81 calamity-hit flood affected districts of the country. However, these are still very initial estimates as new data is coming up on the ground,” said Shah.</p> <p>Both the Pakistani government and United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres have blamed global climate change for worsening extreme weather that caused “monsoon on steroids,” and have submerged a third of the country's land.</p> <p>In a two day visit to flood ravaged Pakistan, Guterres expressed “deep solidarity with the Pakistani people over the devastating loss of life and human suffering caused by this year's floods,” and met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on the disaster response.</p> <p>Guterres called on the international community on Friday to support flood-stricken Pakistan, arguing that while the South Asian nation's contribution to climate change was minimal, it is one of the most impacted by its consequences.</p> <p>“Pakistan has not contributed in a meaningful way to the climate change, the level of emissions of this country is relatively low, but Pakistan is one of the most dramatically impacted countries by climate</p>

	change, it's the front line of the impact of climate change," Guterres said after attending a briefing at Pakistan's National Flood Response Coordination Centre (NFRCC) on Friday.
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HEADLINE	09/12 Southwest megadrought: driest in 1,200yrs
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/12/us-west-megadrought-climate-disaster
GIST	<p>When the Nasa climatologist James Hansen testified before Congress in June 1988 about a warming planet, the temperature in Washington DC hit a record 100F. It was a summer of unprecedented heatwaves, and 40 states were grappling with drought.</p> <p>His warning was seen as a historic wakeup call – but instead of heeding the existential smoke alarm, the US removed the batteries and kept on cooking.</p> <p>Nearly four decades later, the consequences of a sweltering Earth are hitting home in the US south-west and mountain west – comprising states from California to Colorado. Over the past two decades, extreme heat and dwindling moisture levels have converged to create a “megadrought” deemed the driest period in 1,200 years.</p> <p>The west is now in uncharted territory, as once singular conditions become the norm. Its mightiest reservoirs – Lake Mead and Lake Powell – are at record low levels and steadily shriveling. Prolonged, triple-digit heatwaves are making cities like Phoenix, Arizona, and Las Vegas, Nevada, almost unlivable during summers. And wildfires now spark year-round as parched forests and grasslands are more primed than ever to burn.</p> <p>A recent analysis by the Washington Post found that, in some parts of the south-west, average annual temperatures have already risen by more than 1.5C, a threshold widely considered the tipping point at which devastating consequences for people and the environment take hold.</p> <p>The extraordinary conditions offer a warning of what lies ahead for other arid regions that cross this line. It is also a reminder that despite all the modern innovations to circumvent an unforgiving climate, drought may once again have the final say unless drastic steps are taken quickly.</p> <p>“We were given an excellent warning by climate scientists,” says Bill McKibben, the journalist turned climate activist. “And, yet, instead of mustering the will to do something about it, our political and economic systems rallied to do nothing.”</p> <p>In a new series, the Guardian will explore the consequences of megadrought on the communities and environments of the US south-west, where cattle ranchers, Indigenous peoples and tourists alike are seeing their daily lives upended.</p> <p>‘More severe than any previous drought’</p> <p>The researchers behind the study that identified the current megadrought did so by analyzing one of nature's greatest record keepers: tree rings.</p> <p>While drought is a natural part of the south-west's climate, looking at the relationship between tree rings and soil moisture found that the current period of aridity, which began in the year 2000, is unprecedented since 800AD. The 2022 study, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, attributed 42% of the last two decades' hot and dry conditions to global heating.</p> <p>Tim Kohler, an archaeologist and professor at Washington State University, says the current megadrought is different from prehistoric dry periods. “This one seems to be more severe than any of the previous droughts and just as long,” he says. “But the really bad news is all the previous megadroughts took place without the influence of increasing greenhouse gases. Now we are playing a new ballgame and scientists don't know what to expect.”</p>

Recent research has shown how such compelling forces are playing out on the ground.

A [report](#) last February from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) detailed how wildfires ravaging the south-west's ponderosa pine forests are fueling a dangerous "positive feedback cycle". Instead of acting as a "carbon sink" that absorbs CO₂, explains Camille Parmesan, an ecologist who contributed to the report, some forests can actually become generators of greenhouse gases as they burn, in turn driving more heating.

"At some point, we may have put such a long, heavy train into motion that the positive feedback cycles will be locked in and continue to produce CO₂ regardless of what humans do," Parmesan says. "We have evidence this is starting and that is really scary."

Another alarming aspect of the current dry period is something Parmesan calls "synergistic compounding effects"; essentially when the consequences of climate change occur simultaneously and turn what might otherwise have been a normal weather related event – such as a fire, or a heatwave – into a disaster.

One such example is in Colorado, on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains that feeds Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The slope is experiencing less snowfall and higher temperatures. But on top of that, dust storms in nearby Utah have grown bigger and more frequent as the soil dries out; the dust then blows on the mountain, making the snow melt even faster. These two interlocking phenomena are [making the drought even worse](#).

This compounding phenomenon also played out last spring and summer with large wildfires in northern Arizona and [northern New Mexico](#). A dearth of snowfall led to a parched forest floor where drought and pests had already killed many trees. That combined with record heat, low humidity and hurricane force winds to create unstoppable wildfires.

Kathy Oliver found herself in the path of one such blaze, the Tunnel Fire, near Flagstaff, Arizona, in April. Oliver, who operates a local horse sanctuary, awoke one windy morning to the smell of smoke and was forced to flee almost immediately. The fast moving fire, which went on to scorch nearly 27,000 acres, consumed her home and belongings within hours. "I could feel the fire's heat at my back when I was loading the last few horses," says Oliver of her narrow escape with her 21 horses, three dogs, and two cats. "Climate change hit me full on."

'Earth is our source of life and not a resource'

As the west squares up to the worst drought in its modern history, there are lessons to be learned from the past.

Kohler has spent more than three decades studying prehistoric Puebloan civilizations in the south-west, and knows what the stress of a megadrought can do to a community. He says that large Puebloan societies historically evolved during century-long periods of reliable precipitation when farming conditions were favorable, then "fell apart" during intense megadroughts that lasted 20 to 40 years. For instance, when thriving settlements such as Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde were hit by a tough drought in the 1100s, survivors dispersed to smaller communities in what is now Arizona and New Mexico.

But what has puzzled Kohler is evidence from his [archaeological research](#) that shows not every prolonged drought led to the demise of a Puebloan society. He says it was only the socially polarized communities that appeared to collapse during a climate crisis. "What I think happened is that some people in these villages had more wealth, or maize production, than others," explains Kohler. Over time, tensions built between the haves and the have nots. "If there were pre-existing social divisions during a climatic downturn, then you had the potential for violence and village life was thrown into chaos."

Kohler notes that when he found evidence of village members living at the same social level, it appeared they were able to survive a similarly challenging drought by "pulling together and making things work".

There are troubling echoes in the resource wars of today – such as the current stalemate over the Colorado River, where western state leaders have been [unable to agree on](#) how to cut back water use as supplies dwindle. The deadlock poses a dire threat to a reservoir system that provides water to 40 million people and supports a large portion of America’s agriculture.

Cultural memories of extreme climate events live on in the stories of North America’s Indigenous people, who see human survival as dependent on maintaining harmony with all living things. It is a lesson that the Lakota spiritual leader Arvol Looking Horse says descendants of European colonizers have yet to learn.

Looking Horse holds a divinely ordained position among the Plains tribes, similar to the Dalai Lama in Tibetan Buddhism. For him, the forces that put the desires of the fossil fuel industry over the warnings of scientists are the same as the forces that invaded Indigenous homelands centuries ago in a quest for natural resources.

“For Native people, everything on the Earth has a spirit – the wind, the water, the trees, the air – and we are connected to it,” says Looking Horse. “Man has gone too far in abusing Mother Earth. Now Mother Earth is sick. She has a fever.”

Looking Horse says the current state of climate change was predicted in a Lakota prophecy and brings humanity to a crossroads. “We have to stop abusing the Earth and allow her to heal,” he says. “We have no choice because now our lives depend on it. The Earth is our source of life and not a resource.”

The Biden administration’s landmark climate legislation that was signed into law in August will help in the fight. Alongside efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the legislation will also provide \$550m over the next decade to improve water access to disadvantaged communities in the south-west, especially Native American reservations. It also provides \$4bn to fund drought mitigation programs in Colorado River basin states, such as initiatives to encourage municipal water conservation and reduce agricultural water waste.

In the south-west, the challenges of climate change also present new opportunities. With both Lake Mead and Lake Powell at record-low capacity, environmental groups have proposed storing whatever is left of Powell’s water in Lake Mead, thereby reducing the amount of water lost to evaporation. The idea would also return the canyons of Lake Powell to their pre-reservoir state, creating landscapes that act as a carbon sink and potentially even a new national park.

While ranching and growing water-intensive crops like alfalfa may no longer be sustainable in desert states, the region offers excellent locations for new solar and wind enterprises. And as maintaining a green lawn becomes increasingly impossible in places like Utah, home owners are forced to finally let go of the pastoral aesthetic brought to the south-west by European colonizers and embrace prickly native plants.

Thirty-four years after Hansen warned lawmakers climate change had arrived, America is grappling with the consequences of inaction.

McKibben remains undaunted.

“We have to move extremely fast to have any chance at all in limiting the rise in global temperature,” says the author. “New studies keep bringing bad news but I remain hopeful. The antidote to despair is activism.”

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HEADLINE	09/12 Colorado River nearing crisis point
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/colorado-river-denver-climate-and-environment-b9f34ebe2a8a7848926d856b4731b6d4
GIST	DENVER (AP) — The intensifying crisis facing the Colorado River amounts to what is fundamentally a math problem.

The 40 million people who depend on the river to fill up a glass of water at the dinner table or wash their clothes or grow food across millions of acres use significantly more each year than actually flows through the banks of the Colorado.

In fact, first sliced up 100 years ago in a document known as the Colorado River Compact, the calculation of who gets what amount of that water may never have been balanced.

“The framers of the compact — and water leaders since then — have always either known or had access to the information that the allocations they were making were more than what the river could supply,” said Anne Castle, a senior fellow at the Getches-Wilkinson Center at the University of Colorado Law School.

During the past two decades, however, the situation on the Colorado River has become significantly more unbalanced, more dire.

A drought scientists now believe is the driest 22-year stretch in the past 1,200 years has gripped the southwestern U.S., zapping flows in the river. What’s more, people continue to move to this part of the country. Arizona, Utah and Nevada all rank among the top 10 fastest growing states, according to U.S. Census data.

While Wyoming and New Mexico aren’t growing as quickly, residents watch as two key reservoirs — popular recreation destinations — are drawn down to prop up Lake Powell. Meanwhile, southern California’s Imperial Irrigation District uses more water than Arizona and Nevada combined, but stresses their essential role providing cattle feed and winter produce to the nation.

Until recently, water managers and politicians whose constituents rely on the river have avoided the most difficult questions about how to rebalance a system in which demand far outpaces supply. Instead, water managers have drained the country’s two largest reservoirs, Lake Mead and Lake Powell, faster than Mother Nature refills them.

In 2000, both reservoirs were about 95% full. Today, Mead and Powell are each about 27% full — once-healthy savings accounts now dangerously low.

The reservoirs are now so low that this summer Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton testified before the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that between 2 million and 4 million acre-feet would need to be cut next year to prevent the system from reaching “critically low water levels,” threatening reservoir infrastructure and hydropower production.

The commissioner set an August deadline for the basin states to come up with options for potential water cuts. The Upper Basin states — Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Wyoming — submitted a plan. The Lower Basin states — California, Arizona and Nevada — did not submit a combined plan.

The bureau threatened unilateral action in lieu of a basin-wide plan. When the 60-day deadline arrived, however, it did not announce any new water cuts. Instead, the bureau announced that predetermined water cuts for Arizona, Nevada and Mexico had kicked in and gave the states more time to come up with a basin-wide agreement.

STILL LEFT OUT

A week before Touton’s deadline, the representatives of 14 Native American tribes with water rights on the river sent the Bureau of Reclamation a letter expressing concern about being left out of the negotiating process.

“What is being discussed behind closed doors among the United States and the Basin States will likely have a direct impact on Basin Tribes’ water rights and other resources and we expect and demand that you protect our interests,” tribal representatives wrote.

Being left out of Colorado River talks is not a new problem for the tribes in the Colorado River Basin.

The initial compact was negotiated and signed on Nov. 24, 1922, by seven land-owning white men, who brokered the deal to benefit people who looked like them, said Jennifer Pitt of the National Audubon Society, who is working to restore rivers throughout the basin.

“They divided the water among themselves and their constituents without recognizing water needs for Mexico, the water needs of Native American tribes who were living in their midst and without recognizing the needs of the environment,” Pitt said.

Mexico, through which the tail of the Colorado meanders before trickling into the Pacific Ocean, secured its supply through a treaty in 1944. The treaty granted 1.5 million acre-feet on top of the original 15 million acre-feet that had already been divided, 7.5 million each for the Upper and Lower Basins.

Tribes, however, still don’t have full access to the Colorado River. Although the compact briefly noted that tribal rights predate all others, it lacked specificity, forcing individual tribes to negotiate settlements or file lawsuits to quantify those rights, many of which are still unresolved. It’s important to recognize the relationship between Native and non-Native people at that time, said Daryl Vigil, water administrator for the Jicarilla Apache Nation in New Mexico.

“In 1922, my tribe was subsistence living,” Vigil said. “The only way we could survive was through government rations on a piece of land that wasn’t our traditional homeland. That’s where we were at when the foundational law of the river was created.”

COMPETING INTERESTS

Agriculture uses the majority of the water on the river, around 70% or 80% depending on what organization is making the estimate. When it comes to the difficult question of how to reduce water use, farmers and ranchers are often looked to first.

Some pilot programs have focused on paying farmers to use less water, but unanswered questions remain about how to transfer the savings to Lake Powell for storage or how to create a program in a way that would not negatively impact a farmer’s water rights.

Antiquated state laws mean the amount of water that a water right gives someone access to can be decreased if not fully used.

That’s why the Camblin family ranch in Craig in northwest Colorado plans to flood irrigate once a decade, despite recently upgrading to an expensive, water-conserving pivot irrigation system. Nine years out of 10, they’ll receive payment from a conservation group in exchange for leaving the surplus water in the river. But in Colorado, the state revokes water rights after 10 years if they aren’t used.

Not only would losing that right mean they can’t access a backup water supply should their pivot system fail, but their property’s value would plummet, Mike Camblin explained. He runs a yearling cattle operation with his wife and daughter, and says an acre of land without water sells for \$1,000, about a fifth of what it would sell for with a water right attached.

There are other ways to improve efficiency, but money is still often a barrier.

Wastewater recycling is growing across the region, albeit slowly, as it requires massive infrastructure overhauls. San Diego built a robust desalination plant to turn seawater to drinking water, and yet some agricultural users are trying to get out of their contract since the water is so expensive. Some cities are integrating natural wastewater filtration into their landscaping before the water flows back to the river. It’s all feasible, but is costly, and those costs often get passed directly to water users.

Return to Top	<p>One of the biggest opportunities for water conservation is changing the way our landscapes look, said Lindsay Rogers, a water policy analyst at Western Resource Advocates, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting water and land in the West.</p> <p>Converting a significant amount of outdoor landscaping to more drought-tolerant plants would require a combination of policies and incentives, Rogers explained. “Those are going to be really critical to closing our supply-demand gap.”</p> <p>After years of incentive programs for residents, Las Vegas recently outlawed all nonfunctional grass by 2026, setting a blueprint for other Western communities. For years, the city has also paid residents to rip out their lawns.</p> <p>In Denver, Denver Water supplies about 25% of the state’s population and uses about 2% of the water. The city has had mandatory restrictions in place for years, limiting home irrigation to three days per week.</p> <p>This summer, in southern California, the Metropolitan Water District instituted an unprecedented one-day-a-week water restriction.</p> <p>Still, regardless of the type of water use, more concessions must be made.</p> <p>“The law of the river is not suited to what the river has become and what we see it increasingly becoming,” Audubon’s Pitt said. “It was built on the expectation of a larger water supply than we have.”</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	09/12 Ontario Canada shootings: 2 dead, 3 injured
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/12/americas/ontario-deadly-shootings/index.html
GIST	<p>CNN — A Toronto police officer who was taking a lunch break during training was shot and killed in Mississauga by a suspect who later was taken into custody in Hamilton after a second deadly shooting, authorities said at a media briefing Monday night.</p> <p>Authorities said another person was wounded in Mississauga. The suspect fled to Milton and is thought to have shot three more people, killing one, police said.</p> <p>Constable Andrew Hong, 48, of the Toronto police’s traffic unit was shot at close range and died at the scene, Chief James Ramer told reporters.</p> <p>“This is devastating news for his family and for all members of the Toronto Police Service and our entire policing community,” the chief said. “We will lean on each other while we work to support Constable Hong’s family, and each other, in our grief.”</p> <p>Hong is survived by his wife and two children. He had been with the department for 22 years.</p> <p>Peel Regional Police in Mississauga earlier said they were called to the scene of a shooting that took place at the intersection of Argentia Road and Winston Churchill Boulevard where two people were shot just after 2 p.m. ET.</p> <p>The victim who was taken to a hospital has “life-altering wounds” and is at a trauma center, Peel Regional Police Chief Nishan Duraipah said at the briefing. He called the shooting of the constable an ambush.</p> <p>After the suspect fled, three people were shot on Bronte Street South in neighboring Milton, Halton Regional Police said. One person was pronounced dead at the scene and two others were transported to a hospital, according to police. Their conditions were not immediately available.</p>

	<p>“We believe that this was the same suspect who was involved in the shooting here in Mississauga,” Duraiappah said.</p> <p>The suspect – who Peel police said was wearing all black with a yellow construction vest – was taken into custody, according to Halton Regional Police.</p> <p>Both police agencies said they are investigating the connection between the two incidents and believe they are linked to the same person.</p> <p>Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted about the shootings in Ontario late Monday.</p> <p>“My thoughts, and the thoughts of many others, are with all those who knew the police officer killed in the line of duty in Mississauga today,” Trudeau tweeted. “We’re also thinking of those who were injured in today’s shootings – we’re wishing you a full recovery.”</p> <p>Milton, Mississauga and Hamilton are not far west of Toronto.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Street racing: deadly consequences
SOURCE	https://katu.com/news/spotlight-on-america/street-racers-are-taking-over-roads-with-deadly-consequences-as-laws-struggle-to-keep-up-speed-bumps-closing-roads-decoy-police-cars-baltimore-portland-seattle-salt-lake-city-chicago-dangerous-driving
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wa. (TND) — Illegal car races are invading American streets from coast to coast, with shocking video emerging of huge crowds gathered to watch highly dangerous driving.</p> <p>The consequences can be deadly and can terrorize neighborhoods. Despite this growing problem, Spotlight on America has discovered there's only a patchwork of laws and strategies to reign in street racing across the US. Communities have deployed strategies from adding speed bumps, closing roads, even putting out decoy police cars.</p> <p>Experts say more needs to be done to ensure safety on our streets.</p> <p>Street racing is an activity on the rise, from Baltimore and Portland to Seattle and Salt Lake City, and many more communities all across America. Chicago recently formed a task force to try to tackle the problem. Just this past month, Phoenix police said four people were killed as a result of street racing.</p> <p>The issue took root during the pandemic, when roads normally clogged with commuters suddenly emptied, opening the door to a surge in illegal street racing.</p> <p>For some, it's a loud, nerve-wracking interruption to their lives. For others, it's the end of life as they know it.</p> <p>Lili Trujillo had never thought about street racing. She told Spotlight on America she had seen the "Fast and Furious" movies, and had never considered racing happening in real life.</p> <p>Now, she can never forget a December night in Los Angeles in 2014 when she said goodbye to her 16-year-old daughter for the last time.</p> <p>"I saw her standing by the door, and I got teary eyed for no reason when I saw her," Trujillo told Spotlight on America. "Little did I know that was the last time I was ever going to see her alive."</p> <p>Her daughter, Valentina, was a passenger in a friend's car, when the driver was challenged to a race. Trujillo told us the driver took off going over 80 miles an hour and crashed, killing her daughter.</p>

Lili channeled her grief into action, founding an organization called [Street Racing Kills](#), which strives to provide education to youth about reckless driving. On its web page, there's a growing memorial to the "[SRK Angels](#)," those who lost their lives to street racing, including one as young as 6 years old.

More and more communities are dealing with tragedy, including small and big cities.

The insurance tracker known as [Insurify](#) says rates of incidents per capita have exploded in states like North Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin, with Wyoming being the number one state for street racing in 2022.

Worse yet, Spotlight on America discovered there is only a patchwork of laws across the country that criminalize the dangerous activity. According to Insurify, just in the 10 states they examined, the penalties for street racing range from just a \$20 fine to a year of jail time. Because there's no federal legislation about the issue, individual municipalities are left to come up with their own solutions.

One city that grappled with the problem is Tacoma, Washington, just outside Seattle.

Tacoma Police were inundated with calls and complaints this summer, making it an epicenter of the street racing problem in America.

Among the witnesses was city councilmember Sarah Rumbaugh.

"It really hit my heart, you have no control over where you're living," Rumbaugh said. "This is what's happening in your neighborhood."

Rumbaugh joined with her colleagues to take action, quickly approving a city ordinance that criminalized racing attendance. Essentially, it makes it illegal to be a spectator at one of the events. Rumbaugh said that ordinance has wiped out street racing, eliminating the problem in her city.

Tacoma Police said 70 street racers have been arrested just this year, ranging from organizers, drivers and spectators.

But not every community has enacted the same rules. A Spotlight on America examination of local laws shows only a handful of other places have banned spectating, places including the state of Utah, and the cities of San Jose, California, and Fort Worth, Texas.

As cities continue to grapple with the problem, Trujillo is focused on educating young people about the danger, through speaking at schools and meeting with teenagers.

More than 230 people have signed a pledge through her organization vowing not to participate in street racing. She's also advocating for more designated racing tracks so that there is a safe place to race instead of on crowded streets.



HEADLINE	09/12 Life in prison: sold fentanyl that killed 11
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/us/minnesota-man-sentenced-fentanyl.html
GIST	<p>A Minnesota man was sentenced to life in prison on Monday for selling fentanyl that caused the deaths of 11 people who had bought it believing it was a less dangerous drug, the Justice Department said.</p> <p>The man, Aaron Broussard, 31, of Hopkins, Minn., obtained fentanyl from drug suppliers in China and conspired with them to smuggle the deadly drug into the United States, selling the product on his website, prosecutors said in a news release.</p> <p>He mailed it across the country, the Justice Department said, and it was used by the 11 people, who had expected to receive a less dangerous drug similar to Adderall. Instead they ingested a fatal amount of fentanyl, a lab-made opioid 50 times stronger than heroin and roughly 100 times stronger than morphine. In addition to the people who suffered fatal overdoses, four others were seriously injured by the drugs provided by Mr. Broussard, prosecutors said.</p> <p>After delivering the life sentence, Judge Susan Richard Nelson of U.S. District Court in St. Paul told Mr. Broussard, “Your disregard for human life is terrifying,” according to prosecutors.</p> <p>The Office of the Federal Defender in the District of Minnesota, which represented Mr. Broussard, did not immediately respond to a call seeking comment on Monday night.</p> <p>Mr. Broussard was convicted in March in U.S. District Court in St. Paul of 17 criminal counts, including conspiracy, importation of fentanyl and distribution of fentanyl resulting in death, the Justice Department said.</p> <p>On March 12, 2016, Mr. Broussard placed a drug order from China for 100 grams of a less dangerous drug. But the package actually contained 100 grams of 99 percent pure fentanyl, the Justice Department said.</p> <p>“Although Broussard had experienced a similar mix-up in August 2015 and was repeatedly told to test his drugs, he did not do so,” the Justice Department said.</p> <p>From March 31 to April 27, 2016, Mr. Broussard placed the repackaged fentanyl in hundreds of priority mail parcels and distributed them from a post office in Hopkins, which is west of Minneapolis, the Justice</p>

Department said. He would respond to online orders placed on his website, PlantFoodUSA.Net., which posed as a site for plant food, prosecutors said.

One victim, in Grand Rapids, Mich., went into cardiac arrest and later died at a hospital. The victim's mother pointed the authorities to a small plastic baggie in her son's room that contained a white crystalline powder, which later tested positive for fentanyl, the Justice Department said.

Another victim, in Ramsey County, Minn., died in his office. And in Scranton, Pa., a 26-year-old woman unknowingly ingested fentanyl and died of an overdose, prosecutors said.

"Many of these customers died, or were otherwise overcome, within minutes after ingesting the drugs he sent them," prosecutors wrote in a motion for detention. "One can hardly imagine a more serious drug crime."

Mr. Broussard heard that his product was causing adverse reactions, but he continued distributing it, prosecutors said.

"Even after he learned that several customers had been hospitalized and nearly died, Broussard never warned his customers not to take the deadly drugs," the Justice Department said.

Mr. Broussard later reached out to his suppliers in China and requested a discount on his next drug delivery, prosecutors said.

Andrew M. Luger, the United States attorney in Minnesota, said in a statement that Mr. Broussard's actions had brought devastation on friends and families of the victims.

"Although the trauma felt by the victims can never be undone and the true cost can never be calculated," Mr. Luger said, "Mr. Broussard will now spend the remainder of his life behind bars."

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HEADLINE	09/12 Police search: man blew up car at funeral
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/police-looking-man-who-blew-up-car-caused-immense-fire-during-auburn-funeral/GYINPG3BYFEG7KFHWWUW75BIYU/
GIST	<p>AUBURN, Wash. — Police are looking for a man who blew up a car and caused a huge fire during a funeral at an Auburn cemetery last month. Investigators say the suspect also shot at City of Auburn employees.</p> <p>On Aug. 23, police say a passenger in a car put an explosive device in a funeral attendee's car during the memorial at Mountain View Cemetery, which is owned by the City of Auburn.</p> <p>The explosive device created an "immense fire," which destroyed the victim's vehicle and surrounding trees, according to Auburn police.</p> <p>An employee says that as a group of 60 to 80 people was mourning during the funeral, someone approached one of the parked cars, throwing something inside.</p> <p>"They saw a guy run up to the window and break it," said the employee, who asked not to be identified for safety. "Then, not even 30 seconds later, the car exploded," he said. The employee shared pictures and video of the scene with KIRO7 that shows the victim's vehicle – a black Lexus sedan – was destroyed.</p> <p>The employee says the suspect ran back to another car a short distance away and waited about 30 seconds to watch the victim's vehicle explode before speeding off.</p>

“And my lead over the radio said, ‘Get the license plate number of that black car!’” the employee said. He and another co-worker tried to follow the suspect vehicle and they pursued a short distance outside the cemetery.

“The guy popped out of the window and fired four or five shots at me and my co-worker,” he said. That’s when they took cover. “We just ducked, put it in reverse, and got back here,” he said.

“Are you doing OK?” KIRO7’s Deedee Sun asked.

“Yeah,” the employee said. “I don’t know what to make of it. It happened so fast and I got a family I have to feed and take care of, so I got to get home at night.”

The funeral and explosion happened more than two weeks ago, on Aug. 23. But with no arrests, Auburn police are asking for your help.

“It’s a very unusual situation. It’s one we really want to figure out,” said Kolby Crossley, a spokesperson for the Auburn Police Department. “The passenger was the one who threw the explosive device, and the passenger was also the one who shot the rounds. But there was also someone who was driving him.”

The suspect vehicle was described as a black Acura RL with no license plates, and police shared an image asking for the public’s help to identify the car. However, Auburn police acknowledged that commenters on social media were disputing the make and model of the car based on the photo investigators shared.

The suspect was described as a tall man wearing a full black ski mask.

Anyone who recognizes the car or has any information about the case is asked to contact the Auburn police tip line at 253-288-7403.

“It caused a serious fire. And all things considered, we’re pretty thankful no one was hurt. Because this could’ve been 10 times worse than what it was,” Crossley said.

KIRO7 asked Auburn police if the incident was a retaliation or how the suspect might’ve known the victim. Crossley said detectives were still investigating the motive behind the arson and attempted shooting.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Florida school shooting scare ‘cruel prank’
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/shooting-scare-mainland-high-school-cruel-prank-daytona-beach-police/
GIST	<p>A shooting scare at a central Florida high school was a "cruel prank" carried out by two groups of students who now face criminal charges and possible expulsion, police said.</p> <p>Rumors, lies and conspiracy theories have been "floating around" on social media since Friday's lockdown at Mainland High School, Daytona Beach police said Sunday in a lengthy Facebook post.</p> <p>"This entire incident appears to have been a cruel prank by several students that has now gotten out of control due to internet trolls, misinformed people and in some cases, people that are not even in Florida," police said.</p> <p><i>Update on the Mainland High School incident from Friday 9/09/22 There are a lot of rumors, conspiracy theories and lies...</i></p> <p>Posted by Daytona Beach Police Department on Sunday, September 11, 2022</p> <p>Investigators said officials at the school became aware Thursday of a threat written on a bathroom stall. School officials and law enforcement reviewed video and interviewed two students who had entered the bathroom around the time the graffiti was discovered.</p>

The students denied involvement and it was determined that no threat existed, police said.

On Friday, two groups of students in the cafeteria "decided to capitalize on the threat" and "appear to collaborate with each other to create a panic," police said.

They were seen on video "getting into specific positions and locations within the cafeteria, timing their actions" and several female students told an administrator someone had a gun.

At the same time, a male student ran from the building "causing a large crowd to follow him."

Video showed that no one appeared to have a gun at any time, police said.

"Video of these individuals prior to and during the incident shows that neither the male nor the female students observed a gun or flinched as you would expect when shots had just been fired," police [said](#). "At no time in the video, does anyone stand on a table and present a gun, or fire shots as some people have posted."

Detectives have identified students involved in the incident and interviewed most of them. Stories have changed from seeing someone with a gun to "they just heard there was one," the report said.

The agency planned to have an extra presence on campus Monday to "ensure that everything goes smoothly."

Second-degree felony charges for making a false report concerning the use of firearms in a violent manner are pending for those involved, the statement said. Detectives are also recommending that everyone involved be expelled from school.

Meanwhile, CBS affiliate WKMG-TV [reported](#) Monday that a threat posted on social media against Lyman High School in Longwood — about 45 miles away — was deemed noncredible by school officials. Still, officials said security would be heightened at the school on Monday.

"While the threat was deemed to be noncredible, the intent to disrupt the campus is unacceptable. Appropriate disciplinary and legal action will be applied," Seminole County Public Schools said in a message to parents and family members.

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HEADLINE	09/12 FBI, DOJ: HBCU bomb threats
SOURCE	https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2022/09/12/fbi-and-doj-hold-briefing-hbcu-bomb-threats
GIST	<p>The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counterterrorism Division and the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division held a phone briefing with people affected by the ongoing bomb threats at historically Black colleges and universities and historically Black churches, including community leaders and advocacy group representatives.</p> <p>"The FBI is aware of racially motivated threats to more than 50 HBCUs and Historically Black Institutions across the country since the beginning of the year," read a press release from the FBI about the briefing. "As the new school year gets underway, threats to these institutions continue, and the FBI remains committed to investigating and analyzing each one to identify the perpetrator and determine the threat's credibility."</p> <p>Law enforcement officials updated call participants on the ongoing investigation into the threats, which involves more than 30 FBI field offices. The details "cannot be shared publicly due to sensitive aspects of the investigation," according to the release.</p>
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